



Family  
Carers  
Ireland

No one should have to care alone



2020

Annual Report &  
Financial Statements



<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>POLICY &amp; PUBLIC AFFAIRS</b>	<b>39</b>
CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME .....	2	POLICY HIGHLIGHTS .....	39
FAMILY CARING - THE BIG PICTURE IN IRELAND TODAY .....	3	GENERAL ELECTION 2020 .....	39
MESSAGE FROM THE CEO .....	4	PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT .....	41
OUR MISSION & VISION .....	5	BUDGET 2021: LIFE AFTER LOCKDOWN .....	41
COVID-19 RESPONSE .....	6	POLICY PAPERS, SUBMISSIONS & SOCIAL DIALOGUE .....	43
2020 AT A GLANCE .....	8	REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL COMMITTEES .....	43
<b>SUPPORTING FAMILY CARERS</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>RESEARCH</b>	<b>44</b>
MEET FAMILY CARER, JOHANNE .....	9	STATE OF CARING 2020 .....	44
NATIONAL FREEPHONE CARELINE .....	10	YOUNG CARERS IN IRELAND REPORT .....	44
GROUPS & ACTIVITIES .....	11	BEHAVIOURS & ATTITUDES RESEARCH .....	45
MEMBERSHIP COMMUNITY .....	12	PARTNERSHIPS .....	45
WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA .....	13	<b>THANK YOU</b>	<b>47</b>
NATIONAL RESPITE WEEKEND .....	14	PUBLIC FUNDING & SUPPORT .....	47
MEET FAMILY CARER, LYNSEY .....	15	CORPORATE FUNDERS .....	48
IN FOCUS - ENNIS & TULLAMORE CENTRES .....	16	<b>MEET OUR DIRECTORS</b>	<b>49</b>
ONLINE WORKSHOPS & PROGRAMMES .....	17	<b>DIRECTORS' REPORT</b>	<b>53</b>
E-LEARNING COURSES .....	19	KEY OBJECTIVES .....	53
INNOVATION & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS .....	21	ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE .....	54
CARING EMPLOYERS .....	25	STRATEGIC PLAN: 2018 - 2023 .....	55
YOUNG CARERS .....	26	FINANCIAL REVIEW .....	58
MEET YOUNG CARER, EOIN .....	27	STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT .....	62
CARER WELL-BEING .....	28	DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT .....	69
COUNSELLING SUPPORT FOR FAMILY CARERS .....	30	INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT .....	70
EMERGENCY SCHEME .....	31	STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES .....	72
HOME SUPPORT SERVICES .....	32	BALANCE SHEET .....	73
<b>RAISING AWARENESS</b>	<b>34</b>	STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS .....	74
NETWATCH YEAR OF THE FAMILY CARER .....	34	NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS .....	75
CHOIR OF UNSUNG HEROES .....	35	<b>APPENDIX - DISCLOSURE OF STATUTORY &amp; CORPORATE SUPPORT</b>	<b>90</b>
BRAND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN .....	35	<b>REFERENCE &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS</b>	<b>91</b>
TWIST & SHINE .....	36		
FAMILY CARERS IN THE MEDIA .....	37		

# CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the fifth annual report on the activities of Family Carers Ireland (FCI). Life is not easy for anyone at the moment but I am acutely aware of the very many ways Covid-19 made the already challenging role of family carers even more difficult throughout 2020. By many international benchmarks, Ireland's response to the pandemic is good - public policy is effective at getting us to stay behind our front doors but it is much less effective at addressing what's happening behind those doors.

Many family carers experienced increasing feelings of isolation, stress and being presumed upon as the year progressed. As an organisation dedicated to their welfare, we have worked hard to adapt and innovate so that we can offer relevant and practical supports to family carers throughout the country and overall it was a year of greatly increased activity and innovation as described in this report. Particular highlights included:

- provision of emergency supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to over 3,000 families who were unable to access it in the early stage of the crisis when supplies were very restricted;
- a new emergency response service (supporting the Emergency Care Plan booklet) that offers the reassurance to every family carer who registers that we will support their loved one if they are unable to continue caring for any reason; and
- a holistic support process for families in crisis, framed by seven aspects of carer well-being, that incorporates a new intensive telephone/online counselling support service and funding for short-term emergency supports.

As chairperson of the board, it falls to me to thank those who enable and support our work. The crisis seriously impacted our traditional fundraising activities and we were blessed to receive great support from some significant corporate donations – I would like to acknowledge in particular Irish Life, Tesco and An Post whose early support, in cash and in kind, was critical to enabling us to respond to new needs as they emerged.

I would also like to acknowledge the critical support provided to Family Carers Ireland by a variety of state agencies including, in particular, the HSE – without access to core funding we would be unable to deliver the range of services we currently offer. I should also acknowledge the increasing levels of engagement across the public service with issues relating to family carers and the sustainability of long-term care in Ireland over coming decades. The sustainability of Ireland's health system is utterly reliant on family carers, not only in crisis periods such as the current pandemic but also in 'ordinary' times when they are central to hospital efficiency and the management of increasing cases of complex chronic conditions in community settings.

*“As an organisation dedicated to their welfare, we have worked hard to adapt and innovate so that we can offer relevant and practical supports to family carers throughout the country.”*

On behalf of the entire board, I thank our staff whose flexibility and unfailing commitment to the organisation's mission allowed us to constantly reconfigure our services to such good effect throughout the year. Particular thanks is due to our Senior Management Team for their creativity and sheer hard work.

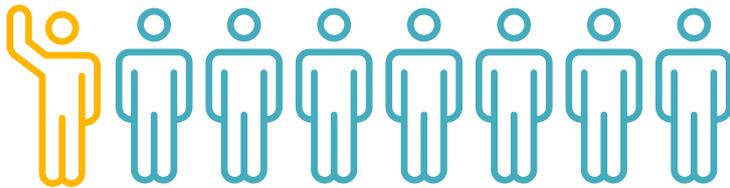
Finally, everyone involved with FCI owes a very particular debt to our unpaid, volunteer directors who bear increasingly onerous responsibilities as a result of company law and charity regulations. 2020 presented many additional and unprecedented challenges including constantly evolving government guidelines and forced innovations such as an online AGM. Our board continued to operate 'virtually' throughout the year and addressed each new challenge in a way which reflected our absolute commitment to the highest standards of charity governance.



Dr. Shane McCarthy  
Chairperson

# Family caring – the big picture in Ireland today

**500,000\*** people in Ireland are family carers



(That is 1 in every 8 adults)

\*approx. figure

**66,956**

young people aged 10-17 years provide regular unpaid care

That is more than  
  
**13%**

Family carers provide **19** million hours of unpaid care each week



Family carers save the state



   
**EACH YEAR**  


By 2030 1 in 5



will be a family carer

**116,838**

family carers receive the Carer's Support Grant

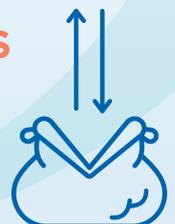
**88,906**

family carers receive Carer's Allowance

(That is only 1 in 4 full time carers)

**€219** MAX. RATE CARER'S ALLOWANCE

Family carers are the only social welfare recipients required to work full time, yet only receive €16 more than the standard welfare rate



Reference: Figures are based on the CSO's Irish health Survey 2019; Census 2016; CSO's Population and Migration Estimates Aprils 2020; Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study undertaken by NUIG and in collaboration with the WHO; data from the Department of Social Protection and findings from Family Carers Ireland's State of Caring 2020 report. The replacement value for care is based on an hourly rate of €20

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

We designated 2020 the 'Year of the Family Carer' to acknowledge the commitment, hard work and sheer determination of family carers in continuing to support their loved ones, keeping them safe through a very challenging year. Home has proved the safest place to be in the pandemic which has, ironically, allowed policymakers to continue to take family carers for granted and to ignore the impact of messaging aimed at the wider population on those with an already heightened awareness of risks associated with Covid-19.

The number of family carers we engaged with increased by an average of over 200% across the country, with almost 15,000 unique contacts and an online community of 100,000 each month.

The scale of our increased primary engagement feeds into proportionate increases in demand for secondary and tertiary support – we have adopted a public health approach to designing our response to this increase in need.

By the middle of 2021 we will hopefully see the fruits of a complex project to integrate our virtual activities into a comprehensive online forum providing a shared, secure space to deliver support and advice; information and training programmes; respite and leisure activities; and news of developments and carer-related campaigns. Many of our 'Covid' initiatives promise long-term value and relevance to family carers who are struggling or in crisis for any reason. One of the key objectives in 2021 is to establish these initiatives on a sustainable basis through a significant organisational change process.

*The number of family carers we engaged with increased by an average of over 200% across the country, with almost 15,000 unique contacts and an online community of 100,000 each month.*

Whilst these developments will allow us to target our resources effectively they can do little to overcome problems with our current funding base. Virtually all of our public funding comes from HSE Services to Older Persons – no monies have been allocated towards the explosion in need for significant support for family carers of people with disabilities and, in particular, parents of children with special needs. Similarly, most of our funding for group and individual supports reflects historical spending patterns by local health authorities – which means that we do not have the resources to meet increased

demand for direct supports in greater Dublin and Cork in particular. Whilst we will continue to develop corporate and public fundraising, we will not be able to sustain current levels of support long-term using only short-term revenue streams.

This points to another key priority for the coming year – ensuring that the government acts in regard to its commitment to a Carer Guarantee. At a meeting with the Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly in November, 2020 we were told that the Department of Health had "secured €2 million in the budget for advancing the National Carers' Strategy, with a focus on providing a more standard package of supports to family carers in every region" and that the service delivery arrangements would be decided by the HSE in the 2021 National Service Plan. The lack of urgency shown by this arrangement is disappointing but we will work hard to ensure that the process delivers the best possible outcome in terms of responding to demonstrated need across Ireland's 500,000 family carers.

We remain committed to the provision of high quality Home Support. We developed new protocols and delivered a major training programme in Infection Control and correct use of Personal Protective Equipment to all our Home Care Workers in the first quarter of 2020. I am happy to note that, in a sector which had generally low levels of infection and absenteeism, our own record is amongst the lowest.

I would like to conclude with some heartfelt thanks. Firstly, thanks to the many individual family carers who assisted us throughout the year with feedback, ideas, suggestions, lobbying and media appearances. Our effectiveness in advocating for improvements in carers' health, wellbeing and financial security are entirely built on such courage and generosity of spirit.

I would also like to thank all those who served on the board in the course of 2020 for their time and expertise. Just as with family carers, the directors of Irish charities are generally presumed upon and under-acknowledged for the onerous personal responsibilities they undertake in a voluntary capacity.

Last and by no means least, I acknowledge the whole-hearted co-operation and support of our staff who, in addition to coping with the impact of the pandemic on their personal lives, have shown initiative, flexibility and resilience throughout the year. The positive tone of this report simply wouldn't have been possible without them.



John Dunne  
Chief Executive

# OUR MISSION

To highlight the contribution of family carers to Irish society and to improve the lives of family carers throughout the country.

# OUR VISION

An Ireland in which family carers are properly recognised, supported and empowered.





# COVID-19 RESPONSE

Throughout this annual report, we will bring you through our organisational response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw unprecedented efforts to ensure Family Carers Ireland continued to operate as both a charity and home support services provider. From migrating every member of staff

to remote working, to creating a range of online supports for family carers, we are proud of how we have faced this challenge and ensured our staff, family carers and home care clients' safety has been protected from the beginning.

1	Increased support on National Freephone Careline	6	Migration of all learning & educational support to online
2	Procurement and national distribution of PPE	7	Increase in free counselling sessions
3	Launch of the National Crisis Fund	8	Increase in Intensive Wellbeing Reviews
4	Development of Emergency Care Plan	9	Development of free e-learning modules
5	Increase in advocacy and crisis case management	10	Launch of the Carers' Coffee Club on Facebook Live





## QUALITY & SAFETY

The Covid-19 pandemic created a multitude of challenges for the organisation across ongoing care delivery and support to family carers. Some of the challenges included the initial shortage of PPE supplies, the need for care and support redesign along with the requirement to ensure our homecare staff team were trained in new Covid-19 protocols and procedures.

The management team in Family Carers Ireland responded effectively, with continuous collaboration and innovation from all staff within the organisation as we navigated the pandemic. Carer, client and staff safety were kept as a high priority and as a result, the risk of Covid-19 was reduced significantly.

A multidisciplinary team met to oversee the safe return to the workplace for our office-based staff and ensure appropriate protocols were in place across the organisation for the safe delivery of our services and supports.

Documentation was regularly reviewed and managed by the Quality & Safety team to ensure it was updated in line with ever-changing national guidelines. The Quality and Safety

Manager attended training at Covid-19 management national education programmes to ensure that the organisation was implementing best practice standards during the pandemic. In line with best practice, a Covid-19 Preparedness Plan for the delivery of our in-home services was developed and continues to be adhered to. Clear guidelines were put in place for staff on managing infection prevention and control, use of personal protective equipment, attending to clients with suspected or diagnosed Covid-19, supporting clients who returned from hospital and how to manage the use of meeting spaces and centre offices during emergency situations. Covid-19 management training was provided to staff members to ensure they were fully trained to reduce risks to clients and themselves.

Although we are still in the middle of this pandemic, we are happy to acknowledge that as a result of our Covid-19 management approach during the last 12 months, there has been significantly low rate of transmission of Covid-19 within Family Carers Ireland which reflects our commitment to safety in the delivery of our supports and services.



## STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Since early March 2020, communication and engagement with our staff has been critical as we navigate through the Covid-19 pandemic. HR provides ongoing support, advice and guidance to management and staff on key issues such as staff wellbeing, health and safety, sick leave and performance to name a few.

Initially, the key focus was to ensure that appropriate policies and procedures were developed and implemented to guarantee the safety of our staff, those delivering care in the home and our office-based cohort, many of whom transitioned to remote working from March 16th onwards. These policies and procedures continue to be reviewed and amended in line with government guidance and advice.

In line with the government's Return to Work Safely Protocol, we successfully returned a majority of our office-based staff to work from our centres in July 2020. This remained the case until level 5 restrictions were reintroduced in November 2020.

Throughout the pandemic, our Home Support Services staff have completed extensive training to ensure their own safety as well as the safety of the family carers and clients we support. This was done while maintaining an exceptional standard of continuity of care to our clients.

Our office-based staff have adapted extremely well to the new way of working with online video systems being utilised to support excellent engagement and high levels of productivity in an ever-evolving organisational landscape.



## IT ADAPTABILITY

When the news of the Covid-19 lockdown emerged in March 2020, Family Carers Ireland responded overnight to ensure that all essential office-based staff would be still able to carry out their day-to-day duties whilst working from home. All essential staff were able to continue to access all FCI IT systems securely, due to an investment in MikroTik hardware, providing a VPN (Virtual Private Network) platform to undertake their duties.

We were also able to leverage the national VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) 3CX phone system to re-route phone calls to laptops and smartphones thus ensuring communication

channels remained open and therefore accessible to family carers seeking our support.

The introduction of 3CX also meant that all staff could take advantage of the web meeting facility, which allowed us to continue to engage securely and seamlessly with each other via audio and video meetings. The 2020 AGM took place online via the 3CX Web meeting platform while FCI also used Microsoft Teams and Zoom technology to host online meetings for both staff and family carers.

# 2020 AT A GLANCE

calls to  
Careline & centres  
**25,000**



**27,000**  
families supported



**20,604**  
phone calls  
made to  
family carers



membership  
**UP 20%**



**125,000**  
website users



news reach  
**6.4m**



**254**  
training courses  
provided



**249,508**  
hours of in-home  
support



**3,000+**  
PPE packages  
distributed



**5,887**  
family  
carers  
trained



**f 35**  
Carers' Coffee  
Club sessions



**22,000+**  
followers on social media



# MEET FAMILY CARER, *Johanne*

"Being a carer is who I identify as. It is who I am. It's like, a butcher is still a butcher when they retire, aren't they?"

The words of Johanne Powell who adds that a "strong social conscience" means she will continue to campaign for better supports and services for Ireland's 500,000 family carers, even after her own caring role has come to an end.

Originally from Norway but living in Fethard-on-Sea, Co. Wexford, Johanne spent over 36 years caring for her beloved daughter Siobhan who was born with a rare chromosome disorder and was intellectually and physically disabled, requiring round-the-clock care. Sadly, Siobhan passed away in August 2020.

"I grieve very much but I grieve for me and Alan [Johanne's husband]. I don't grieve for Siobhan because she had a good life, a happy life and she was getting to the limit of where it was a good life anymore," says Johanne, describing how her daughter had grown more and more tired as her kidneys finally gave up before she passed peacefully at home.

Johanne recalls how there were "no services really" in the early years of Siobhan's life, how she was left without any transport to her day centre in Wexford and that it wasn't until she was 13 or 14 that she had access to an education "because at the time, the government said that children with severe and profound disabilities weren't to be educated".

"She only had an education for around three years and I'm still very sore about that because I think if she had a structured education from early on, she would've been able to do more things," says Johanne, who added that the lack of proper services was a problem for them through her whole life and that it "breaks my heart when I see people still have the same problems".

She describes as "vital" her relationship over the years with her peers and Family Carers Ireland, saying that the support they received from the caring community when Siobhan passed "made a massive difference".

"I miss the support meetings we used to have in Wexford where you'd sit with the other carers and have a cup of coffee and talk about everything and nothing. Because all of us say the same, carers understand and carers don't judge each other. That support is invaluable. You don't have to apologise, you don't have to explain, you can just be yourself because we've been there and done that."

Johanne continues to be a powerful advocate for family carers and people with disabilities, serves on the board of FCI and is a member of the FCI's Parents of Adults with Intellectual Disability (PAID) group.



*Johanne with her daughter Siobhan*



*The Powells*

# NATIONAL FREEPHONE CARELINE

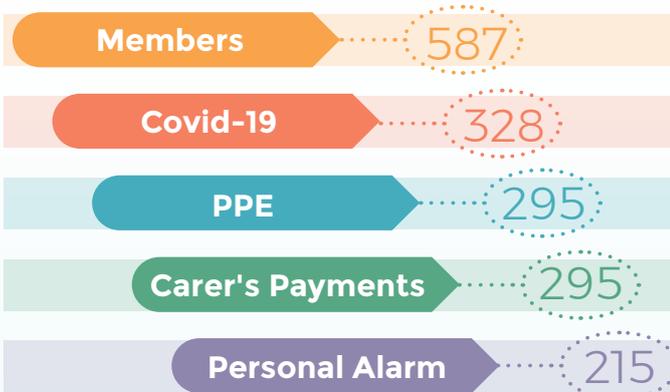
## 1800 24 07 24

### About

Family Carers Ireland's National Freephone Careline offers confidential, friendly support and guidance to family carers across the country. Our experienced staff and volunteers are trained to listen to the concerns of callers, offer practical information about available FCI supports and signpost them to one of our Carer Support Centres. The Careline team also provides information and referral services to other relevant organisations including State agencies, HSE, local authorities and community groups. The Careline operates from 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 12pm on Saturdays. We also work in partnership with the Samaritans who take out-of-hours calls from family carers on our behalf.

**4,534 CALLS/EMAILS RECEIVED**

### TOP 5 QUERIES:



### Providing a listening ear & guidance

In 2020, our Careline received **4,534** incoming calls and emails from family carers seeking information, support and sometimes and most importantly a listening ear.

These calls resulted in signposting to other crucial services provided both in-house, including well-being reviews, one-to-one counselling, advocacy and peer support; and externally including condition specific and medical advice and support in gaining access to State provided services.

Specially trained volunteers play a vital role in assisting Family Carers Ireland to directly support family carers. On our Careline, the volunteer team consists of eight current and former carers, retired professionals and caring community members all willing to give their time to offer a listening ear, provide information and lend support to family carers. They come from a variety of backgrounds and have personal experiences that enable them to connect with callers in a meaningful way.

Covid-19 meant that volunteers were unable to come into the call centre, so systems were put in place to ensure they could work remotely and continue to take family carers' calls. In 2020, they provided over 800 hours of coverage on the Careline and this valuable service could not operate without the essential support of this dedicated team.

Thirteen staff members from Arthur Cox LLP also stepped in to help provide support to family carers at the height of the pandemic. From May to August, they reached out to 222 of our new members by phone to make welcome calls. Welcome calls provide an opportunity for us to personally connect with family carers, advise them of the benefits of membership and inform them of the vast array of supports available to them through Family Carers Ireland.



# GROUPS & ACTIVITIES

Our goal is to connect with even more family carers regardless of their location or specific caring role, and one of the positives that has come from the Covid-19 pandemic is greater connectivity of carers across the country.

Social distancing and various levels of lockdown restrictions significantly impacted how Family Carers Ireland groups were able to operate. Where traditionally groups would meet face-to-face, many of our groups migrated to online platforms in an effort to keep family carers connected and engaged.

Online support groups and an increase in the number of training and education programmes we had on offer provided more opportunities for carers to come together, share their experiences and knowledge and learn from one another in a safe, non-judgmental setting. Through these online groups, carers continued to experience a sense of community, empowerment and improved mental and emotional well-being. What was also evident is that many experienced reduced feelings of social isolation and an increased sense of confidence in their own strengths and abilities in their caring role.

Activity groups became the most popular online offerings as a result of Covid-19. Walking challenges, chair yoga, meditation, bingo, quiz nights, coffee clubs, knitting and painting are only a few examples of the variety of activities that were offered around the country.

The informal nature of activity groups allowed for members to sign up for topics that were of most interest to them regardless of where they lived. Family carers from around the country could join in and participate in activities that varied in length from one-off offerings, in short term, time-limited sessions or recurring events that took place on a weekly or monthly basis.

## Meet Mary

Mary cared for her husband Joe who is living with dementia. He was due to move to a nursing home in 2020 but this was cancelled as they were no longer accepting new residents due to Covid-19. Mary was experiencing a high level of stress as she herself was unwell and she feared for her husband's safety as she found it increasingly difficult to manage supervising him to ensure he didn't wander away from the house.

With the support of Irish Life funding, FCI provided a home care worker four days a week for 12 weeks to assist Mary in her caring role and to give her the break she so desperately needed. The home care worker provided personal care and companionship to Joe, engaging him in activities as well as accompanying him into the garden for walks.

FCI provided this service up until Joe was accepted into the nursing home.

## Meet Catherine

Family carer Catherine from Sligo cares for her two children, aged 22 and 20. Her 20 year old son Michael has severe autism and requires full time care. When day services shut down in 2020 both Mary and Michael found it very difficult to cope. Mary told us how she watched Michael regress before her eyes with challenging behaviour becoming more and more frequent as a result of frustration and lack of stimulation. Mary found it extremely difficult to know what to do or how to respond to these outbreaks. She found she could not calm the situation. FCI funded a professional trainer to go into the home and train Mary and her daughter on how to respond to these behaviours and how to cope with the outbreaks when they occurred.

# MEMBERSHIP COMMUNITY

Total Membership  
**7,392** (\*Up 23%)

Total NEW  
**4,235** (\*Up 20%)

Total RENEW  
**3,035** (\*Up 78%)

Membership has always been a core offering of Family Carers Ireland and growing our membership base allows us to provide a stronger voice for family carers across the country. We pride ourselves in having a membership offering that not only helps to build a community of family carers, but also delivers relevant discounts, deals and offers across four key areas:



Home Savings



Ireland Getaways



Social Activities



Health & Wellbeing

\*Increase comparative to 2019 figures.

With the arrival of Covid-19, membership numbers soared as thousands of family carers across the country recognised the importance of having a card which identified them as such and could be shown to Gardaí if they were stopped while undertaking essential journeys related to their caring role or for showing in supermarkets or other retail outlets offering priority shopping hours. Compared to 2019, new members increased by 20% in 2020 while renewals were up 78%.

Communication between FCI and our membership also increased during 2020. Through our newsletters, members received important updates from the CEO on the organisation's response to the pandemic, information on services being provided by local centres during lockdown, our Emergency Scheme, details of new virtual supports such as online counselling and E-learning modules and a letter to be shown alongside the FCI membership card identifying the person as a family carer should they be stopped by Gardaí while travelling for essential reasons.

Another key area of focus in 2020 was our partner base. With nearly all venue entry points and hotels closed due to the pandemic, it became more important to deliver membership benefits within the home savings and health and wellbeing categories. Among the companies who came on board were Eir who offered savings across broadband, mobile phone and TV, Skechers who offered an incredible

10% off all online purchases with delivery nationwide and Homecare Medical who provided cardholders with a 10% discount in-store and online.



Our free young carers card underwent a refresh last year. The card can be used as proof of caring responsibilities for schools, colleges and health services as well as offering exclusive discounts for young people to avail of and enjoy.

In 2020, 120 new young carers signed up for their card and are able to access offers from the likes of ABC Bookshop, Study Clix, Grafton Barbers, Omniplex Cinemas, Zipit Forest Adventure, Gym Plus and lots more!



Get in Touch | Download App  
 National Freephone Carline  
 1800 24 07 24 | Membership | Donate

About Us | Family Caring in Ireland | Carer Supports | Home Supports | Emergency Scheme | News & Campaigns | Publications | Help Us | Q



The Family Carers Ireland website serves as a first port of call for tens of thousands of family carers every year seeking advice on their rights and entitlements, information on supports, services, activities, campaigns and membership, contact details for their local centre and much more.

With support from the Dormant Accounts Fund, our brand new website went live in July 2020. As part of efforts to ensure a more carer-friendly experience, the redesigned site is very easy to navigate, quick to load and fully mobile responsive; serving as a one-stop-shop for information on all that FCI has to offer.

Visitors are met with an engaging slider image which is used to direct family carers to specific campaigns or sections. This includes our Carer Supports section which is laid out in a straightforward manner to signpost carers to specific supports including counselling, our Emergency Scheme, carer support groups and our Young Carers programme. There are also plenty of information resources including our new interactive

E-learning courses, updated Rights and Entitlements guide, Carers' Coffee Club videos and advice on Pobal's Seniors Alert Scheme including the option to request a copy of the application form by post.

Throughout the site, we have added information and call back request forms as well as 'quick links' to ensure that visitors can connect with FCI easily and find the information they need without having to search through the site.

From July to December 2020, the new website recorded over 78,000 sessions – a 16% increase when compared to the same period in 2019 – while the number of users increased by 8% to over 57,000 and page load times improved by almost a third – all testament to the improvement in the overall user experience.

Through the course of the year, www.familycarers.ie recorded 174,000 sessions from 125,000 users.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, social media has proven to be a hugely effective mechanism for Family Carers Ireland to reach and connect with family carers right across the country.

With normal face-to-face activities curtailed, more than ever it has allowed us to engage with family carers and keep them informed about the organisation's activities, supports and services (many of which moved online); campaigns and causes; coverage of family carer related topics in news and politics and membership benefits. FCI's social media channels routinely reach thousands of people every month.

Our Facebook presence in particular grew in 2020 with follower numbers soaring by 27% to almost 20,000 and content reaching over 7,000 people per day on average.

Part of this growth can be attributed to the success of our virtual Carers' Coffee Club initiative in which a different guest each week delivers a talk for family carers and takes questions via Facebook Live. Experts in the areas of health, self-care, finance and law are among those to have presented with over 30 sessions delivered following the launch of the initiative in April 2020.



Twitter too experienced strong growth with the number of followers of @CarersIreland increasing by 16% to over 6,300 and tweets by FCI earning an average of 3,400 impressions per day.

Followers of our LinkedIn page more than doubled to almost 700 while our Instagram account, which was established in January, attracted over 800 follows in the year.

# NATIONAL RESPITE WEEKEND

Before the pandemic took hold, over 130 family carers descended on The Clayton Cork City from March 6th to 8th for Family Carers Ireland's National Respite Weekend 2020. Those arriving on Friday were greeted by the FCI team with goodie bags and freshly made scones and tea. With full access to the leisure centre, many decided to avail of the facilities whilst others took part in a relaxing session of chair yoga.

Everyone then gathered for a delicious meal in the hotel restaurant with Lord Mayor John Sheehan giving an official opening address in which he welcomed everyone, thanked them for their selfless dedication to caring for their loved ones and recognised the massive contribution they make to society. Guests then continued the evening in The Globe bar where they mingled, chatted, danced and sang late into the night.

Saturday brought sunshine and many activities including nail painting and hand massages while carers could also visit some of the many stands displaying everything from handmade jewellery to healing stones. There was also an interactive Ceilí class and a guided city tour walk for those feeling more energetic.

The evening prosecco reception was attended by Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin who mingled with attendees and posed for photos before making a speech as he joined family carers at the gala dinner.

Following on from the meal, there was a raffle with lots of great prizes handed out before the DJ kicked off an evening of dancing which lasted into the early hours. A super night was had by all!

It was another hugely successful National Respite Weekend and thanks to all who helped to organise the event and those who attended.



*Fianna Fáil leader  
Micheál Martin  
addressing  
attendees at FCI's  
National Respite  
Weekend*

# MEET FAMILY CARER, *Lynsey*



*The O'Donovan family*

Lynsey O'Donovan from Swords, Co. Dublin describes her son Jack as a "very happy, sociable child" who loves his mum, his dad Cathal, three younger sisters Sophie, Robyn and Katie and snooker, cars and music. The eighteen year old has cerebral palsy, epilepsy, is confined to a wheelchair, PEG-fed, non-verbal and requires 24/7 care.

Washing, dressing, feeding, changing and administering medication form just part of Lynsey's caring responsibilities while Jack sleeps next to his parents and requires regular turning overnight - "on a good night, about ten times," she says.

Reflecting on an extremely difficult 2020, Lynsey describes how everything stopped as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. "In the first lockdown, we had our nine hours (home support) a week stopped, school stopped, everything gone. My husband was still in work so it was myself and four kids at home, home-schooling. Jack had nothing then - there weren't even Zoom classes which aren't really suitable for him anyway because I would have to sit with him through the whole class because he can't do it on his own."

She says she would have been on her knees if it wasn't for the support of her three daughters who are "amazing to their brother" and "go above and beyond". With the help of his sisters, Jack took to his walker during the summer and completed a remarkable 5km trek over two weeks to raise vital funds for FCI and the Central Remedial Clinic - with FCI receiving over €4,000.

Lynsey says it was a massive relief to receive help from FCI in 2020 in securing home supports for her mother-in-law who has dementia and spent part of the week with the family before moving to a nursing home. She also says that calls she received from FCI to check she was ok or if she needed PPE "means a lot when you're here on your own and trying to get by".

With Jack having recently turned 18, Lynsey says they face a period of uncertainty as to what the future will hold, conceding that the transition from school to adult services is a "minefield" but they are hopeful he may be able to spend another year at school.

When asked how she would like to see things improve for Ireland's family carers in the future, Lynsey says removing obstacles to support and a little bit more recognition would go a long way:

"Me personally and I don't think any other family carers are looking for a pat on the back. That's not what we're looking for but it's just that when we do go looking for something, that it's properly listened to and you're not passed off or told 'no, that can't happen'."



*Jack and his three sisters*

# IN FOCUS

## Ennis Centre

<b>Centre Location:</b>	8 Tracklands Business Park, Ennis, Co. Clare
<b>Carer Supports Manager:</b>	Victoria Ward
<b>Counties Served:</b>	Clare and North Tipperary

As a centre, we are very proud of how we managed to support family carers throughout 2020 as we experienced a record number of individual engagements which totalled in excess of 12,000 for the year. Those who had never sought support previously reached out to us and we were recognised as a major support in the community for family carers.

In normal times, family carers visit our centre for face-to-face support, social events and training. In compliance with Covid-19 public health guidelines, these activities moved online in early 2020.

In order to counter the impact on those caring for a loved one, we prioritised our time to allow for regular “check-in” calls to be made to all family carers registered with us and we worked very closely with the local authority and Gardaí to ensure that when we identified vulnerable carers in our communities, they would receive additional supports.

We also prioritised the provision of small personal touches such as care packages and flowers. The feedback from and appreciation shown by recipients was phenomenal and really allowed us to develop excellent relationships with a large number of family carers. This was especially important as the overwhelming concern expressed to us was that people felt isolated and completely alone.

Fundraising activities, which also offer an important social outlet for family carers, were severely impacted by the pandemic. While planned events such as church gate collections, bake sales and our first Christmas sale were all cancelled, the centre still managed to raise in excess of €16,000 – a significant achievement considering the environment.

We are extremely grateful to those who supported our work in 2020 including the Friends of Clare group which funded all of the care packages and flower deliveries and to volunteers from Knitting for Premature Babies who donated in excess of



*Halloween treat packs which were distributed to local family carers who are caring for a child*

Washable face masks for us to distribute to family carers across Clare and North Tipperary.

With the support of funding from Irish Life, a specially adapted electronic toilet was installed in the home of one family carer – making a huge difference to the life of their loved one – while a number of family carers were supplied with tablets to help them access online supports.

We look forward to welcoming people back into our centre and are planning a comprehensive suite of in-person and online supports to help as many people as possible. We are never too busy to listen and would encourage all family carers to simply reach out to us if they are in need of support.



*Family carers wearing masks sent from the Ennis centre*

# Tullamore Centre

<b>Centre Location:</b>	Market Square, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
<b>Carer Supports Manager:</b>	Beth Wogan
<b>Counties Served:</b>	Offaly and Laois

The Tullamore centre and FCI national office is a hive of activity in normal times. Staff across a number of departments are based here with the door always open and the phone always answered to any family carer seeking information, one-to-one support, wishing to take part in one of our training workshops or join one of our peer-to-peer support group meetings.

While our centre closed to the public in March 2020 in line with public health guidelines, we have worked harder than ever behind closed doors to continue our wonderful work in supporting family carers across Offaly and Laois.

As family carers struggled with school and day service closures and cuts to respite, we stepped in to offer a vital lifeline. With the support of funding from Irish Life, Tesco Ireland and Tullamore DEW, we provided family carers with PPE to keep them and their loved ones safe from the Covid-19 virus; respite to some of those who had lost all services due to the pandemic, home teaching hours, equipment to assist with behaviours that challenge and free counselling sessions to a number of family carers in need of intensive support.

All workshops and courses normally offered in person moved online while regular calls were made to those who would usually attend our support group meetings. These groups will be held virtually until it is safe to open our doors again.

We are extremely grateful to the local community and businesses for their support during what was a very challenging year. Our local chemist provided free prescription deliveries to family carers; the credit union provided members of our Special Needs Support Group with vouchers for spa treatments; Offaly Local Development Company gifted vouchers for Christmas turkeys for all members of our Dementia Support Group while our local shops generously donated enough items for five luxury hampers raffled for members who attend the general support groups.

As with staff elsewhere in the country, the team in Tullamore are excited for the day when the doors will open once again. In the meantime, we continue to work tirelessly to support family carers who themselves have stepped up in such a remarkable fashion to the challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Carer Supports Manager Beth Wogan (right) being presented with vouchers for family carers of the Dementia Support Group by Martina Nugent (left) from Offaly Local Development Company



Pauric Druhan (left) from Pearse Trust presenting to family carers on trust funds and wills at a workshop held in Portlaoise



A family carer receiving some Christmas cheer from her local centre

# Online Workshops & Programmes



Throughout 2020, Family Carers Ireland ran a series of online workshops and education programmes funded through the Dormant Accounts Fund that provided a range of self-care tools and techniques to assist family carers to discover techniques to support their own well-being. The workshops and programmes also supported family carers to develop a greater understanding of their role, give them new or enhanced skills that support them in their caring role, or create new opportunities for them outside of that role. A total of 502 family carers engaged with the workshops and programmes below:

- Level 6 Certificate in Family Caring:** Family Carers Ireland worked in conjunction with IT Carlow to develop and deliver a stand-alone 10 credit Level 6 course in family caring. The course was delivered over six weeks and included modules on the Role of the Carer; Communication and Listening Skills; Self-Care; Practical Care Skills; Person-Centred Approach and Care Planning. Seventy-one participants completed this course online in 2020.
- Caring for a Person with a Progressive Life-Limiting Condition:** This programme was developed to provide emotional and psychological support to enhance carers' well-being through facilitated support sessions combined with relevant information and training on key aspects of caring. The course was aimed at those caring for persons with a life-limiting condition, e.g. Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, Dementia, Motor Neuron Disease or heart disease. A range of topics was covered including Digestion and Nutrition; Practical Care Skills; First Aid in the home; Health & Safety and Infection Control; Behaviours of Concern; Principles of Self-Care and Life-Planning for the Carer. Twenty carers completed this course in 2020.
- Mental Health & Family Caring - Supporting the Supporters:** Family Carers Ireland worked in conjunction with Mental Health Ireland to co-produce and deliver an education programme for families of people living with mental health challenges. The programme was co-delivered by staff from Mental Health Ireland, Family Carers Ireland, family carers, people with lived experience of mental health challenges and a number of other community partners. The programme included modules on: Communication and Listening Skills; Self-Care; Recovery Principles; Exploration of Boundaries and Problem-Solving. A total of 48 people completed the course online.
- Condition/Carer Specific Workshops:** Thirty-two workshops covering a range of topics were delivered online in 2020. Topics included: Understanding Behaviours of Concern; Nutrition; 5 Ways to Well-being for Family Carers; Caring for a Person with Dementia; Self-Care for Carers; Supporting Former Carers; Minding the Minders: Male Carers Workshop; Managing Stress & Anxiety; Trusts and Wills; PEG Feeding; Continence Care; First Aid; Parents of Children with Special Needs; and Living with a Person with an Acquired Brain Injury. A total of 314 carers engaged with these workshops.
- Caring with Confidence:** Caring with Confidence is Family Carers Ireland's core introductory education and training programme for family carers. The programme recognises the need to balance the acquisition of essential care skills with tools for self-care, and supports carers to recognise the importance of the role they play, both within their own circle and within the larger healthcare context. Topics covered include: Continence Care and Nutrition; Loss; Grief and Bereavement; Self-Care and Supports and Services. Five courses were delivered face-to-face over January and February 2020 and 49 carers engaged with these courses.



# E-LEARNING COURSES

Family Carers Ireland developed a suite of E-learning courses in 2020 which aim to provide information and guidance to those caring for loved ones at home. Launched in October, this online initiative has been particularly timely given the curtailment of in-person courses due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**The courses, which can be accessed through the FCI website, cover five key areas:**

- ✓ **Self-Care for Family Carers**
- ✓ **Family Caring and Coping with Grief**
- ✓ **Supporting Good Nutrition and Hydration for Family Carers**
- ✓ **Positive Communication for Families**
- ✓ **Continence Care for Family Carers.**

Each includes an introduction and overview of the topic and allows family carers to work through the information at a time and pace that suits them.

These courses were developed with the support of the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Dormant Accounts Fund administered by Pobal.



*All courses were highly rated in evaluations and many participants provided glowing personal testimonials.*

"It was great to just be able to get out my own frustrations and struggles here to someone who clearly has vast knowledge of the area and its difficulties. Listening to the other parents also, knowing you are not the only one in such a tough situation."

"This was an excellent course that exceeded my expectations. Each module was interesting and provided valuable information and pertinent, practical advice, a lot of which I will incorporate into my daily routines as a carer. Each presenter was approachable and knowledgeable on their respective topics."

"I am genuinely delighted to have signed up for the course and grateful to have taken part."

"It helped in these strange, Covid-19 times to feel less isolated by being able to link in once a week with other carers and with the course providers."

"Self-care, family care plan and coping with loss were three topics that not only hit home for me but gave me something to really think about."

# INNOVATION & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

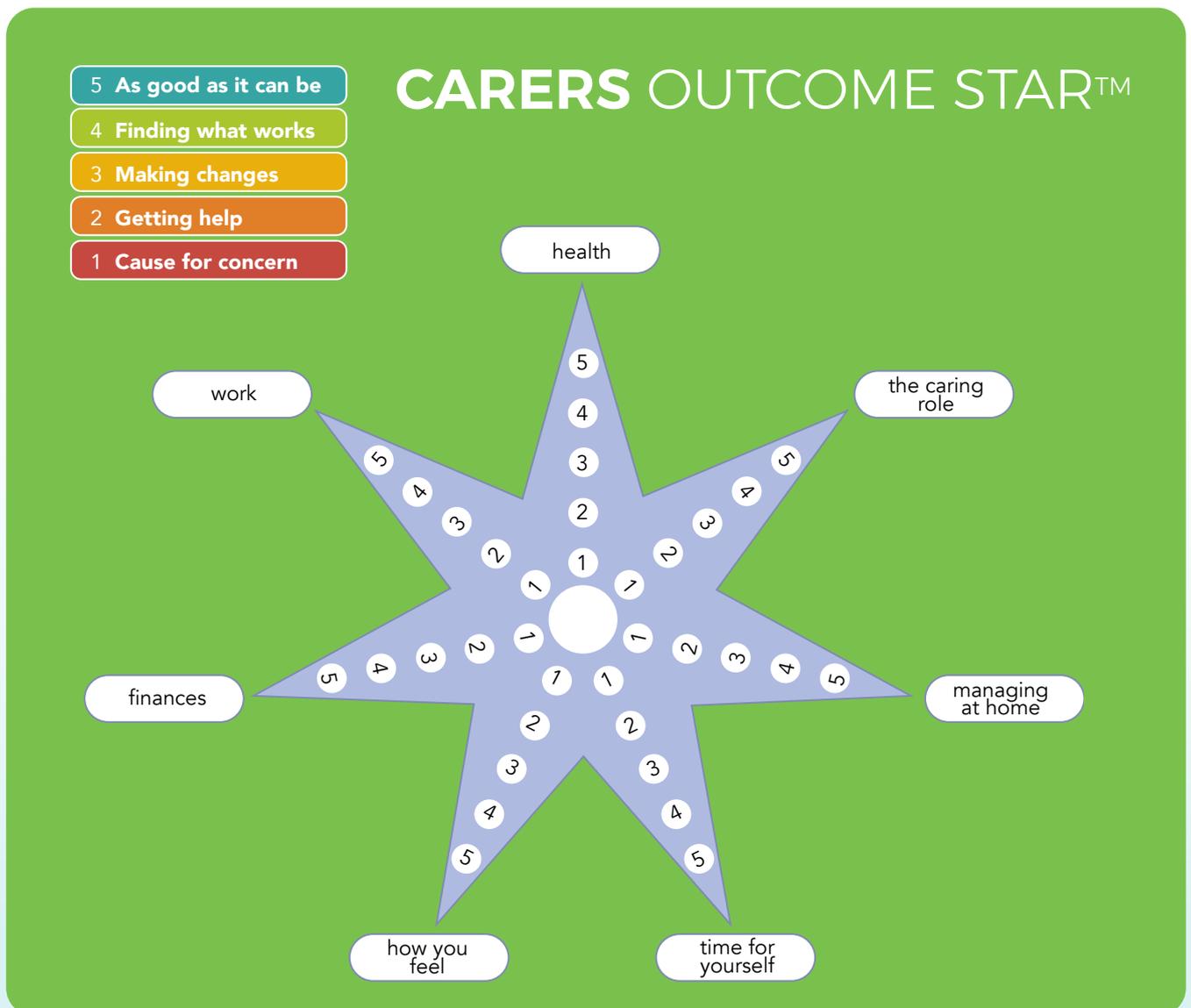
## INTENSIVE WELLBEING REVIEW PROJECT

Pre-Covid-19, Ireland's family carers experienced financial difficulty, social isolation and ill-health and the pandemic made an already difficult situation much worse.

FCI, in partnership with the HSE Disability Service, led a pilot project to support the wellbeing of family carers of people with disability during summer 2020. The HSE, via three CHOs, referred 32 family carers who were experiencing distress to FCI for a wellbeing review using the Carers Outcome Star™.

A Carer Supports Manager discussed seven areas of their life with them and together, they developed and agreed an action plan and worked with them to implement it over an eight week period. Interventions included information, respite, counselling, respite equipment and training.

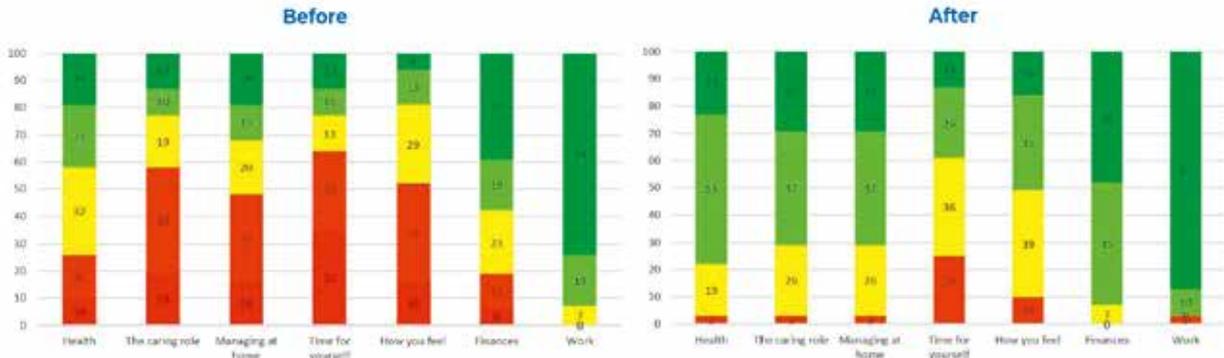
The pilot study found that review and action planning supported the development of a sustainable caring routine with an average positive change in 3+ areas of the family carer's life. 100% of family carers recommended the reviews and 100% believed that other family carers should be offered a review.



These graphs represent a **Before and After of the Journey of Change for Family Carers**. The **red and orange** are those in most distress.

- Cause for concern
- Getting help
- Making Changes
- Finding what works
- As good as it can be

Look how those colours change post intervention.



### MEET SIOBHÁN



Siobhán cares for her son who has an intellectual disability and displays many behaviours of concern. She also cares for both her parents. Her father has a diagnosis of dementia, and her mother is a recent amputee. Siobhán's son is now 18. Due to COVID-19 there is likely to be no day service placement available to him or transport. This is causing stress and anxiety for all. Siobhán felt unable to cope due to the workload and the physical and emotional stress of caring for three adults with complex needs.

Siobhán was referred by the HSE to FCI. She completed an Intensive Wellbeing Review with a CSM over the phone.

#### IN RESPONSE SIOBHÁN:

- Availed of counselling
- Was empowered to address her own health issues
- Was supported to advocate for her son
- Benefited from someone being there to support her

#### AS A RESULT:

Siobhán reported having more time for herself, she was managing better at home and far more satisfied with her family caring role.

If there had been no intervention, Siobhán's ability to care for 3 people with complex needs would be compromised. If Siobhán's issues escalated, she would be no longer able to provide care. Her son would require 24/7 high support care and both parents would need to be admitted to a nursing home.

**The alternative annual cost to the State if Siobhán's care situation breaks down is at least €400,000.**

### THIS MAKES ECONOMIC SENSE

The average cost of a wellbeing review and intervention to support family carers like Siobhán and Mary, to develop a sustainable caring routine, including some additional respite and counselling if needed, can be provided by FCI for €1,000 per family carer.

The alternative annual cost to the State if a family carers' situation breaks down could be higher than €400,000. If the programme prevented the collapse of four caring situations from its 'at risk' population of 1,500 - it would have already have delivered a budget saving.

### MEET MARY



Mary cares full-time for son with autism. She finds her caring role extremely difficult as the majority of supports, services and therapies have been withdrawn due to COVID-19. It's hard to cope. Her son has become increasingly agitated and stressed which has resulted in an increase in his behaviours of concern. She expressed a need to receive training in order for her to be able to protect herself from physical outbursts and to learn how to diffuse the situation if/when her son responds with aggression. Car travel is a risk as her son lashes out at the driver from the back seat.

#### IN RESPONSE MARY:

- Availed of free MAPA training and other behaviour focused workshops
- Received in home respite and respite equipment (incl. a car harness and trampoline)

#### AS A RESULT:

Mary reported that her own personal health had improved a little. She was more positive about the caring role and was managing at home much better. She reported feeling happier and also had built in some time for herself during the week.

If there has been no intervention and Mary was unable to care for 6 months due to burnout or injury as a result of her son's behaviour, emergency accommodation for her son will be needed.

**The alternative half year cost to the State if Mary's care situation breaks down is at least €125,000.**

"I feel blessed to have been chosen to take part in the project. People are crying out for help and don't know where to go. Being asked if you need help is such a big thing for our family."

"The project makes me feel like carers are being recognised. To get my story across, feel listened to, I'd hope carers would be more listened to. Having my son referred to FCI's young carer support manager has been really helpful too."

An application to the HSE under the Strengthening Disability Services fund was made in Autumn 2020 and we await the outcome of this application.

## RETHINK IRELAND AWARD: THE FAMILY CARER SUPPORT PROJECT

Family Carers Ireland was delighted to be among the 20 charities, community groups and social enterprises to benefit from €1.3m in funding announced in 2020 as part of Rethink Ireland's Innovate Together Fund.

The Family Carer Support Project will address the need to systematically assess and respond to the support needs of families caring for an older person. The project will be delivered in partnership with the HSE and run in Cork/Kerry as a pilot initially. The learning from the pilot will have an impact on how family carers of older people will be supported in the future.

The funding, totalling €141,175, will be used to appoint project staff and develop the interventions for the project in 2021. The needs of the family carer will be assessed and, based on the level of associated risk, three pathways of intervention will be offered:

- 1. Low Risk** – Information about why it's important to identify as a family carer, information about FCI's supports and services and access to the Emergency Scheme
- 2. Medium Risk** – Caring with Confidence Programme, Virtual Carers Clinic and all the above.
- 3. High Risk** – Carer Wellbeing Review using the Carers Outcome Star™. Carers will meet with a Carer Wellbeing Manager to complete the Carer Outcome Star™ that will support the development of an agreed action plan across seven key areas of the family carer's life. Depending on actions agreed, family carers will have access to counselling, respite, respite equipment, a crisis fund, advocacy, education and training. Family carers will be supported over a 12 week period to work on the actions agreed.

This project will, for the first time, introduce a model of assessment and triage of family carers of older people to ensure they get the right support, at the right time, in the right place to help them to develop a sustainable caring routine. This is vital, particularly during the pandemic, as family carers want to be able to support their loved ones to remain at home for as long as possible.

FCI will be working closely with the HSE's community and acute services to deliver the project during 2021 and the learnings will inform the development of FCI's future model of support for family carers of older people.

## HRB COVID-19 RAPID RESPONSE FUNDING

Many family carers are under pressure during the coronavirus pandemic and need support. Around the world, agencies like Family Carers Ireland are working to provide this support and we are delighted to have received funding under the Health Research Board and the Irish Research Council scheme to evaluate our Covid-19 innovations.

This will allow a research team comprised of staff from FCI, Maynooth University, Linneaus University and University College Cork, led by Prof. Willie Molloy, to compare how this support is being delivered across Europe and will evaluate models developed to provide support in Ireland to family carers during Covid-19. The findings will help policymakers in Ireland and Europe to effectively provide family carers with the support they need.

Our application was one of 39 Covid-19 research and innovation projects to benefit from a €10.5m investment, part of a coordinated Covid-19 Rapid Response Research, Development and Innovation programme supported by Science Foundation Ireland, in partnership with the Department for the Economy and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland and the Irish Research Council and Health Research Board.

This research project commenced in December 2020 and will run for 13 months. We look forward to learning more about European models and evaluating our supports including online counselling, the emergency scheme for family carers and intensive wellbeing reviews.

## PRESENTATION TO GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

FCI's Head of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships Dr. Kathy McLoughlin attended the Association of Departments of General Practice Irish College of General Practitioners Joint Scientific Meeting 2020 in March to present a joint paper with Research Officer Dr Nikki Dunne entitled 'A decade of decline in the health and well-being of family caregivers in Ireland; Implications for General Practice'. The paper was well received and has led to the development of a working group to examine the development of guidance for GPs regarding the identification, assessment and signposting of family carers in General Practice.

An application has been made to develop a guidance document for publication by the Irish College of General Practitioners by the working group which comprises representation from Maynooth University, University College Cork, three practising GPs and an expert academic GP from the UK.

An application for funding was also made by the group to the New Horizons research call to support development of education to support the roll out of the guidance document and at year end, we were awaiting the outcome of this application.

## LAST AID

Demographic changes will lead to a worldwide increase in the number of older people suffering from dementia, multi morbidity and frailty. This implies a growing demand for care of the older person and end-of-life care training. As most people want to die at home, the need for palliative care and end-of-life care at home will rise. To meet this increased need, public education in basic palliative care can enable everybody to participate in support for their family members, friends, neighbours or others in need.

Based on the experiences of teaching First Aid to the public, the concept of a Last Aid course was first introduced by an emergency medicine consultant Prof. Georg Bollig in Germany. An international working group has established a curriculum for a Last Aid course. Pilot courses have proven the feasibility of the concept in 14 countries including Norway, Denmark, Scotland, Austria, Australia and Germany. More than 25,000 citizens have already participated in Last Aid courses and more than 2,000 trainers have been trained across many European countries.

In 2020, Family Carers Ireland purchased the licence to deliver the Last Aid training course in Ireland and in partnership with The Irish Hospice Foundation and Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB) intend on offering Last Aid to the general public to include family carers in 2021.

The overall aim of the programme, when offered to the community, is to equip participants with the basic knowledge and skills relating to palliative and end of life care and will help to nurture compassionate communities. The course is ideal for family carers who may be caring for someone with palliative care needs or for any citizen who wants to learn more about dying, death and bereavement.

We look forward to completing the Train the Trainer programme in 2021.

## GRANDPAD

FCI received a donation of 20 GrandPads from GrandPad Ireland and Salesforce in summer 2020. These tablets offered isolated family carers an opportunity to connect digitally with friends, family and FCI to reduce isolation during Covid-19.

The devices have been especially useful when family carers and the people they care for have been separated due to the pandemic. For example, a man who had a stroke was in Peamount for a number of weeks in rehabilitation and the GrandPad meant that his wife could stay connected to him digitally, see his progress and also use it to connect with the medical team to record physio exercises for use when he came home.

## WORKING CARE OUT PROJECT

FCI submitted an application to the new Dormant Accounts Fund in autumn 2020 and were delighted to be notified in December that we have been awarded €199,815 for the Working Care Out project.

It aims to identify and support current and former family carers engaging in employment activation and/or education by assessing their wellbeing and delivering tailored interventions to support a sustainable care, work and/or education routine. The project also includes new digital resources for those supporting young carers.

**Family Carers Ireland**  
No one should have to care alone

### WORKING CARE OUT

Helping family carers to re-enter the world of work and education

Proudly supported by

---

**THINKING OF RETURNING TO WORK OR EDUCATION?**

In Ireland today, there are over 500,000 family carers who provide unpaid care in the home to family members, relatives or friends who have additional needs. You could be caring for a child with an intellectual disability or a parent with dementia and you may have given up paid work or education to take care of them.

Over time, your care situation may have changed and maybe now you would like to get back into the world of work and/or education. Family Carers Ireland is here to help you. We understand the prospect of returning to work or study can be a daunting one. But our **FREE Working Care Out Project** is here to offer you support and guidance as you navigate this path.

---

**WHAT IS INVOLVED WITH THE WORKING CARE OUT PROJECT?**

1. Complete a Working Care Out registration form by downloading it from [www.familycarers.ie](http://www.familycarers.ie) or Freephone 1800 24 07 24 or request one by post.
2. When we receive your completed registration form, we will contact you to arrange an appointment for a wellbeing review.
3. You will meet the Working Care Out Project Manager via Zoom to complete a wellbeing review. If you don't have internet access, the review can be done over the phone - however if as at possible we ask you to try to use Zoom - it's always good to see each other!
4. After the meeting, we will discuss your goals for work or education and will consider your wellbeing using the Carers Chat™. We'll talk about 7 areas of your life:
  - Health
  - The Caring Role
  - Time for Yourself
  - Managing at Home
  - Finances
  - How you Feel
  - Work and Education
5. We'll then talk about the barriers you are experiencing and agree actions to help you overcome these barriers with confidence.
6. The Working Care Out Project Manager will check in with you every 2 weeks to report you to achieve your goal.

---

**ONGOING SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT**

In addition to working with your one-to-one, you will also have the option to attend a group-based online support and skill development programme to meet other family carers who would also like to return to work or study.

**In this programme you will receive training in:**

- ✓ Realistic career exploration
- ✓ Where to look for job/courses
- ✓ Time Management
- ✓ CV prep
- ✓ Study skills
- ✓ Social Media profile
- ✓ Use of technology
- ✓ Interview skills

**You can also:**

- Attend a virtual clinic with an employment specialist who will answer your questions about job seeking, career or education pathway.
- Attend specialist online workshops delivered throughout the programme.
- Engage with a range of other supports and services offered by Family Carers Ireland, e.g. counselling, respite etc.

---

**HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?**

If you would like to avail of this FREE service or get support with any other aspect of your caring or former caring role please:

- Email us at [wc@familycarers.ie](mailto:wc@familycarers.ie) to submit your interest
- Call our Freephone Caroline on **1800 24 07 24**
- Or visit [www.familycarers.ie/workingcareout](http://www.familycarers.ie/workingcareout) to find out all you need to know!

**ABOUT US**

**Family Carers Ireland** is the national charity dedicated to supporting the 500,000+ unpaid carers who dedicate their lives to caring for and adults with physical or intellectual disability, frail older people, those with palliative care needs and people living with chronic illness or addiction and mental health issues (mental health).

To find out more about Family Carers Ireland, please visit [www.familycarers.ie](http://www.familycarers.ie)

# CARING EMPLOYERS

Through the Caring Employers programme which launched in 2019, Family Carers Ireland partners with companies in a pledge to support those juggling work and care – ensuring they feel supported and empowered in the workplace.

If 2020 has done anything, it has shone a very bright light on family caring in Ireland. As people checked in on and looked after cocooning parents, grandparents and relatives, the subject of “caring” was brought more to the fore with a new found appreciation and recognition for the 500,000 who care for loved ones every day.

With the dawn of remote working, the closure of schools, day services and other essential supports and services for family carers and those for whom they care, life became more of a balancing act than ever before for the 250,000 people in Ireland today balancing work and care. Thankfully, many organisations have started to realise the sheer weight of supporting their staff who have caring responsibilities and the Caring Employers programme continues to connect and partner with those companies who wish to put supports in place and retain the talent they employ.

In June, Bank of Ireland officially announced their partnership with FCI and membership of our Caring Employers programme, joining Irish Life as steering committee members. The new venture was launched with a webinar, hosted by their Executive Sponsor and Chief Marketing Officer Henry Drummer.

The session welcomed over 110 participants/employees of Bank of Ireland from communities nationwide and was facilitated by Catherine Cox, FCI Head of Communications & Policy; Marian Mahon, Carer Engagement and Sue O’Grady, Marketing Manager. This kickstarted a 12 month programme of activity between FCI and BOI, with the bank also launching similar programmes for their UK, France, Germany and US based staff.

Towards the end of 2020, FCI also created a five minute animation video on the project which is available to view on our website and offers insight into how the Intensive Wellbeing Review via Outcome Star™ supports family carers who are experiencing high levels of pressure.



*A still from the Caring Employers animation*

FCI also signed contracts with two new companies - ROCHE Pharmaceuticals and EA Gaming - with activity commencing in 2021.

With thanks to the Dormant Accounts Fund, we also advertised the Caring Employers programme in the Sunday Business Post and across a two week ad campaign on Newstalk.



In addition to the above, support from the Dormant Accounts Fund also afforded us the unique opportunity to have motivational speaker Mark Pollock address our Caring Employers members and the wider business community with his virtual talk ‘Turning Challenges into Opportunities’.



*Mark Pollock*

## CARING EMPLOYER WEBINAR SESSIONS:

We have delivered a number of webinars during Covid-19 to the following organisations, with a focus on what FCI has been doing to support family carers during Covid-19, as well as discussing topics such as Carer’s Leave and Carer’s Benefit.

- Technology University (TU) Dublin
- The Department of Justice
- The Department of Public Expenditure & Reform
- The Marie Keating Foundation (co-presented webinar)

# YOUNG CARERS



## COVID-19 IMPACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had a significant negative impact on the lives of young carers. While it seems that children and young people are less likely to experience significant physiological effects from the virus itself, the indirect impact of restrictions introduced by the Government to control the virus are likely to have a major impact on their psychological well-being. Alongside this, the support systems in place are struggling under the increased pressure, potentially drawing the focus away from the needs of these already marginalised young carers and their families.

Family Carers Ireland has noticed that the caring responsibilities for many young carers increased exponentially since the beginning of the pandemic, particularly for young carers aged 16 years and over. This includes greater responsibilities both for the person they are caring for and their younger siblings.

The loss of school and established routine for extended periods has also had an impact on the physical and mental health of young carers and their parents. For many young carers, school is a refuge and gives them a break from their caring responsibility and an opportunity to feel like 'normal' young people. Remote learning is not an option for some young carers who struggle to balance their online classes with cooking, cleaning, washing, shopping, and helping to look after siblings. For young carers in exam years, the effects of this are especially damaging.

Some of the young carers we work with have had to cocoon to protect their loved ones which means they have had little or no opportunity to meet up with friends or to participate in social activity. They have had no respite from their caring roles and are close to burn out.

Our Young Carers Service saw a 60% increase in referrals and membership sign-ups in 2020. It is believed that this increase was at least in part due to the Covid-19 pandemic and indeed many of the initiatives we ran during 2020 dealt specifically with issues that young carers faced as a result of the crisis.

In total, just over 400 young carers received support through the service. This includes membership sign-ups, intensive support and one-off engagement with specific projects.

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING WEBINARS

Our Young Carers Mental Health & Wellbeing Webinars held in 2020 gave small groups of young carers the opportunity to participate in themed discussions with a qualified psychotherapist in a safe and secure online setting. The aim of the webinars was to equip young carers with the knowledge and skills needed to help deal with a range of issues including mental health, isolation, stress and anxiety, anger management, family conflict, bullying and study skills amongst others.

Fourteen webinars were run between June and August and reached a total of 98 young carers.

## TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUNG CARERS SCHEME

FCI received 148 applications for iPads and laptops under the Technology for Young Carers Scheme in 2020. The aim of the scheme was to provide young carers with the technology needed to participate in online classes and to stay connected with friends and family. Priority was given to young carers in exam years and in higher or further education who did not already have access to a laptop or iPad.

Fourteen laptops and seven iPads were distributed to 21 very deserving applicants.



## HOTEL RESPITE BREAKS FOR CARING FAMILIES

Towards the end of 2020, FCI was awarded €20,000 under the National Lottery Respite Care Grant Scheme to provide caring families with hotel respite breaks. The funding allowed us to present 40 very deserving families each with a €500 gift voucher for either the Dalata Hotel Group or Center Parcs Longford. Priority was given to families of young carers or other children impacted by the caring situation at home.

## MEET YOUNG CARER, *Eoin*



Eoin (17) lives in Co Waterford with his mum Sinead. In 2017, Sinead was diagnosed with breast cancer, but after a long hard battle and with huge support from her son, Sinead finally went into remission.

However in 2020, Sinead and Eoin got the horrific news that the cancer was back as she was diagnosed with stage IV (metastatic) breast cancer which had spread beyond the breast and nearby lymph nodes to the bones and liver. Sinead underwent various treatments including chemotherapy and radiation therapy and she is on multiple drugs to help manage her symptoms. Despite all of these treatments, the cancer is incurable and her prognosis is terminal.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic in March, Eoin made the decision to look after his mum full-time. He stopped going to school and gave up meeting his friends to help protect her from the virus. The only time he would leave the house was to do grocery shopping and to attend appointments with his mum. Eoin began having anxiety attacks as he worried about his mum's illness. He refused to talk to anyone outside the family about what was going on at home.

In the autumn, they moved into a council house that was better suited to their needs. The house was unfurnished and so Eoin spent the first few weeks sleeping on a mattress on his bedroom floor.

Sinead, worried about Eoin, contacted Family Carers Ireland's Young Carer Development Manager Padraig McGrath who set up a Zoom call with Eoin and carried out an assessment of his caring role and his needs. After the initial assessment, it was clear that he needed to speak to a therapist about what was happening to his mum. It was also obvious that Eoin, now in his Leaving Cert year, needed to attend classes so that he could sit his exams. Padraig put together a support plan which included goals such as arranging some therapy for Eoin, getting him back to education and improving his sleeping arrangements and the living conditions at home.

Through Young Carers Project funding, Padraig set up some counselling sessions with a therapist that Eoin felt comfortable enough to talk to. After just a few sessions, the anxiety attacks stopped and he was better able to talk about

his mum's condition with people outside the family.

Padraig then contacted the school who were not aware of Eoin's situation. They were keen to support him in any way possible and suggested that he could take part in the classes virtually through a new system that had been set up in the school. Eoin agreed to participate in his classes online so that he could still stay close to his mum. Padraig procured an iPad for Eoin through the Technology for Young Carers Scheme to allow him to participate in the classes and to stay connected with his friends. He has now moved into the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme which he felt was a better fit for him and his career goals.

After a mid-point assessment of Eoin's needs, Padraig put in an application to FCI's Hardship Fund to purchase a bed for Eoin. The application also included the provision of a dining set and a sofa for the house to help make life more comfortable. Eoin has said that being able to eat dinner with his mum at their new dining table every day is one of the best things that's happened to him since her diagnosis.

Following a phone call from Sinead about how Eoin was still missing classes to do jobs at home, Padraig suggested that she put in a call to her local Family Carers Ireland Carer Supports Manager about getting some practical help. The Carer Supports Manager arranged a daily home help visit for Sinead to assist her and Eoin with housework and some of Sinead's care needs. This has been a tremendous support.

During his final assessment meeting with Padraig, Eoin spoke about how he was upset that the travel restrictions imposed by the Government due to Covid-19 and his family's low income were preventing him and his mum from going on any kind of break. Eoin explained that he wished to make some memories with his mum outside of their home.

Padraig then contacted the Dalata Hotel Group, who have partnered with FCI on the Hotel Respite Breaks for Caring Families Project. After hearing Eoin and Sinead's situation, the group gifted the family a complimentary voucher which can be used at any of their hotels in Ireland. Eoin and his mum are now looking forward to the restrictions lifting so that they can enjoy a break away together in Cork.

# CARER WELL-BEING

## WHAT IS THE OUTCOME STAR™?

Outcome Star™ is a method which provides consistency and quality support, ensuring that the person in need of support experiences the same conversation no matter where in the country they may be located. Family Carers Ireland have adopted the Carers Outcome Star™ which addresses 7 different aspects of life:



## Journey of CHANGE

## THE PROCESS

In simple terms, a family carer in need of support presents to the FCI Carer Support Manager (CSM). The CSM has a conversation with the carer using questions based on the seven areas above, providing a snapshot of where the carer is on a scale of 1 to 5 (the scale is called the Journey of Change) in each area, at that first meeting.

The CSM explores with the carer what goal would benefit the carer most, in each individual area. When realistic goals are established, the CSM works in collaboration with the carer to agree actions which will deliver on each goal. The actions must be Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Timed (SMART). The CSM and the carer work together on delivering the actions over an agreed short-term, usually eight to twelve weeks (some actions may take less time).

At the end of the eight to twelve-week period (when the actions are complete), the carer and the CSM meet again and complete a new Outcome Star™ reading, which is a new snapshot of where the carer is now on the scale of 1 to 5 on each of the seven areas. This second reading can now be compared to the first, and the difference between both is referred to as the distance travelled by the carer.

## 2020 STAR READINGS

There were 452 Star Readings completed by CSMs in 2020 across our FCI network.

### Some interventions resulting from Outcome Star Goals and Action Plans in 2020:

- Referral to online counselling sessions
- Encouragement to look after her own health needs and visit GP
- Assisted carer to write to the HSE to seek support for her son who had very high needs and whose behaviour had become very challenging because of lack of services and his disability
- Advocated on behalf of carer for better supports and services
- A listening ear
- Home care, day services and respite provision
- Increase in existing levels of home support
- Access to training supports
- In-home care equipment
- A write off of outstanding debts relating to pharmacy costs
- Resumption of adult disability day services post pandemic
- Assignment of a new social worker
- Provision of transport

## Examples of information provided when using the Outcome Star™ in 2020:

- Rights and entitlements including Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit, Carer's Leave, Domiciliary Care Allowance and Disability Allowance
- Medical Card / Carer GP Visit Card
- Wills and trusts for people with a disability
- Residential and respite support including RSSMAC
- Care planning and responsibilities of home care agency
- Tax relief and credits for carers
- Electricity and utility discounts available through FCI
- Housing supports and priority waiting lists
- Home share options through Muíriosa Foundation
- Safeguarding – complaints and reporting

## Carer Testimonials

"It was really uplifting at first when the Carer Support Manager called. I signed up and took up the counselling offered and this is the first time I'm having counselling and I'm beginning to see great value in this. I would say it would be very beneficial for all carers, whether they're fully confident and have no bothers or whether they're too bogged down to reach out for help - I would say having someone to reach out and ask how you're doing, it's just fantastic to know FCI exist."

"For me, the initial contact and being told, look let's look to see what the issues are and what we can do. Somebody looking at you rather than the person you're caring for is so important."

"I feel blessed to have being chosen to take part in the project. People are crying out for help and don't know where to go. Being asked if you need help is such a big thing for our family."

## CSM Testimonial

"Using the Outcome Star tool enables me as a worker to start a meaningful and focused conversation with a carer to identify high risk areas in their caring journey. It also helps me build a trusting and meaningful relationship with the carer where we are both focused on working towards positive outcomes."

*Maggie Lally, Family Carers Ireland*

# COUNSELLING SUPPORT FOR FAMILY CARERS

Being a family carer can be very rewarding, but can also be very demanding. Research carried out by Family Carers Ireland in conjunction with the College of Psychiatrists Ireland and UCD School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Systems identified that family carers have significantly higher rates of diagnosed depression and anxiety than the general population. We also recognised the impact the Covid-19 lockdown had on family carers’ mental health and wellbeing.

In order to support family carers during this time, an online counselling service was launched in May 2020, supported by the Dormant Account Fund. The service delivered 1,341 counselling hours to 168 carers. The mean number of counselling hours delivered to each carer was 8 (Standard Deviation: 3.8, Range 1-19). The CORE-OM, a standardised outcome measure, was used to capture the impact of the service on carers’ levels of psychological distress. Data was returned for 82 carers during 2020.



The national clinical cut-off score for the CORE-OM is 10. This means that people scoring above 10 would be considered in a ‘clinical population’. The higher the score, the higher the levels of distress being experienced by the carer. The mean total score for carers prior to counselling beginning was 16, with a standard deviation (SD) of 6. Therefore the majority of carers had moderate levels of psychological distress, with some reaching into the moderate-severe category, and some reaching into the mild category. After counselling, the mean total score for carers was 9, with a SD of 5. Therefore, the majority of carers had returned to a low level or healthy category of distress, with some still reaching into the mild category. This change is illustrated in Figure 13.

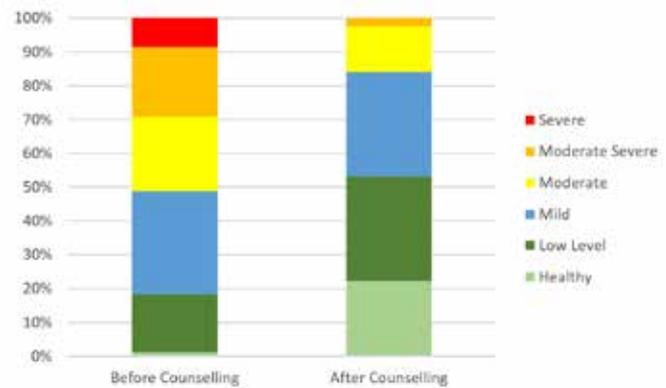


Figure 13: Distress Levels as Measured by the CORE-OM before and after Counselling

In interpreting the CORE-OM, a change of 5 or more indicates a reliable change (i.e. not due to chance) and a reduction to 10 or less indicates clinically significant change. Based on the data the reduction observed in carer distress as a result of counselling is both reliable and clinically significant.

FCI also created a leaflet, kindly funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund, which is accessible through our website and encourages family carers who are thinking about engaging in counselling to learn more about the benefits and how it works.

**Family Carers Ireland**  
No one should have to care alone

## FAMILY CARERS IRELAND COUNSELLING SERVICE

A free and confidential support for family carers across Ireland.

**WHAT DOES THE SERVICE OFFER?**  
Family Carers Ireland's counselling service provides family carers with up to eight sessions of counselling free of charge. Some family carers find they only need a couple of sessions, while others need to continue for a longer period of time. We understand that counselling is a unique journey for everyone. If you feel you need more than eight sessions, a low-cost fee is negotiated for additional sessions.

**HOW IS THE COUNSELLING DELIVERED?**  
Family Carers Ireland's counselling service is delivered face-to-face in one of our centres, through a secure video link or by phone. Each counselling session lasts 50 minutes. Our service is provided through a network of staff and volunteers who are fully accredited counsellors, qualified counsellors working toward full accreditation and student counsellors.

*"I'm only half way through the counselling sessions and I've already benefited from some basic exercises that I'm only itching to find out more so there's definitely a lot of benefits. It's good to know that I need to dedicate some time for myself so I have fresher perspective on caring."*  
- Anonymous family carer



# EMERGENCY SCHEME

One of the biggest concerns for family carers is who will take care of the person they care for if they, the family carer, become unwell. This was magnified for family carers all over Ireland in March 2020 when Covid-19 struck.

In response to these concerns, FCI developed a new emergency scheme in partnership with An Garda Síochána, the National Ambulance Service Emergency First Responders, The Irish Red Cross and The Order of Malta. An Taoiseach Micheál Martin launched the scheme in late August 2020 and to year end, 125 cards were issued.

The initiative offers family carers great peace of mind. They register for the scheme, which is free of charge (thanks to funding from Irish Life, Dormant Accounts Fund and SSNO) by completing a care plan about the person they care for and nominating two emergency contacts. The family carer returns this plan to FCI by post, email or via our website and we log the plan and code the case as red or green.

Red cases will receive an immediate Garda response in the event that the nominated emergency contacts are not available. These cases include people with epilepsy, children under 18 and people with dementia. Cases coded green receive a volunteer-led response in the event that their nominated emergency contacts are not available.

The family carer receives their emergency card and in the event of an emergency, the person who finds the card can phone a freephone number on the back. This call links to a 24/7 call centre which will retrieve the plan and mobilise the emergency response. Funding for up to 72 hours in home emergency care is also available free of charge through this initiative.

A social story to explain the scheme to family carers was developed by Sensory Space and published on the FCI website and shared on social media along with an explanatory video.



Family carer Moira Skelly and Taoiseach Micheál Martin pictured at the launch of the Emergency Scheme

# HOME SUPPORT SERVICES

Family Carers Ireland has been delivering quality in-home care for more than 20 years and has been an approved HSE provider since the HSE began outsourcing home support services on the basis of competitive commercial tenders. Our operating standards exceed those set by the HSE in areas such as staff training and continuity of care. FCI prides itself on a person-centred approach to homecare, with a clear emphasis and acknowledgement of the needs of both the client and the family carer. We take a holistic approach to services delivery and promote inter-agency collaboration to ensure clients and families are aware of and avail of all relevant services that may positively impact their lives.

We are particularly proud of the manner in which we managed our service and supported clients and their families throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. We achieved very low levels of client and staff incidences of Covid-19, due in no small part to the adoption of stringent quality measures in tandem with a core staff of home care workers who have adapted to and complied with all the new measures and protocols.

This was further supplemented by mandatory training in Infection Control and the correct use of enhanced Personal Protective Equipment for all home care workers early on in the pandemic. Once again, our protocols exceeded minimum specified requirements and as a result, in a healthcare sector which had generally low levels of infection and absenteeism, our own record was amongst the lowest.

We have a team of 450 fully trained home care workers nationally, delivering homecare services into every Community Health Organisation in the country. We work closely with the HSE, the family and service user to ensure a robust Individualised Homecare Plan is put in place and monitored on an ongoing basis.

This team is supported by a professional, experienced management team and the service is underpinned by a best-practice based quality management system, which ensures client and staff safety are paramount and that regulatory compliance is achieved.

Client and staff safety are central in the delivery of our service.



# WE DELIVERED **249,508 HOURS OF HOME SUPPORT** DURING 2020.

The duties involved in supporting the above care are:

- General Elderly Care – assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADL) & Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL)
- Dementia Care;
- Palliative Care;
- Care for clients with mental health issues;
- Care for clients with limited mobility (e.g. hoisting);
- Care for clients with progressive life-limiting conditions;
- Care for clients with visual, hearing and communication impairments;
- Care for clients with physical disabilities.

## **Our 2020 Home Support Client Satisfaction Survey had a 43% response rate. Topics addressed included:**

- Care worker arrives punctually and stays for the scheduled required amount of time
- The quality of care provided by the home care worker
- Telephonic / written support from the FCI Centre and Manager
- Access to records regarding the care in the home folder
- Overall opinion of service and likelihood of recommending the service

Average ratings were between 5 and 6 (very satisfied and extremely satisfied) across all these topics. 94% of people responded that they trust Family Carers Ireland to provide safe and effective care and would recommend the organisation to a friend.

*We would like to give a special mention to our team of home care workers throughout the country who have remained positive, professional and above all, caring throughout the past year. Well done to all.*

# NETWATCH YEAR OF THE FAMILY CARER

The Netwatch Carer of the Year Awards are normally a major highlight of the FCI calendar as we shine a light on family caring in Ireland and recognise the unseen work done up and down the country every day. Those in receipt of an award become ambassadors for the 500,000 carers in Ireland and the gala awards ceremony, usually held in Dublin in November, is a very special occasion attended by FCI staff, our sponsors and family carers alongside their loved ones.

Because of the restrictions on travel and social gatherings, it was decided to celebrate family carers in a different way and to recognise their remarkable resilience in the face of a pandemic through the Netwatch Year of the Family Carer.

Key to the event was a special fundraising photography exhibition titled Every Picture Tells a Story. Featuring striking and moving imagery of ten family carers and those for whom they care, the photos were put on display in the courtyard of the Irish Museum of Modern Art and online at [www.familycarers.ie](http://www.familycarers.ie), with companies or individuals encouraged to purchase a portrait in support of a crisis fund established by FCI to help family carers most in need during the pandemic.

TV cameras from RTÉ captured the launch and interviewed two of the family carers featured for a special package which aired on Six One and the Nine O'Clock News while national media including the Irish Independent and Irish Examiner also ran feature interviews with some of those whose images were on display.



The Netwatch Year of the Carer also included a Concert for Family Carers which was broadcast online on [www.familycarers.ie](http://www.familycarers.ie) and across our social media channels. Hosted by our long-serving patrons, Mary Kennedy and Marty

Whelan, the concert featured Celtic Tenor Matthew Gilsean and special guest Deirdre Shannon from Celtic Woman who performed inspirational songs to honour family carers and their loved ones.



The concert was acknowledged by Uachtarán na hÉireann, Michael D. Higgins, who wrote a thought-provoking message for family carers. Below is an extract from his letter:

"It is my great hope that, as we emerge from this unprecedented chapter of our nation's history, we will interrogate the values by which we must live together, rediscovering in post-pandemic Ireland the instincts of empathy and concern for collective welfare that may have become neglected in recent years."

The Every Picture Tells a Story campaign raised an incredible €80,000 for our crisis fund and the concert was attended by hundreds of family carers and their friends who watched the live stream.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the steadfast support of Netwatch and all their staff who have been avid supporters of FCI for two years and to thank the team at IMMA for allowing us to bring our campaign to life in one of the most beautiful settings in Ireland.



*Netwatch Brand Ambassador Mick Galway with Netwatch CEO Wendy Hamilton and FCI's Catherine Cox pictured at the launch of the exhibition in IMMA*

# CHOIR OF UNSUNG HEROES

A heartfelt, inspirational and moving two-part documentary shining a light on Ireland's extraordinary family carers aired on RTÉ One in June 2020. David Brophy's *Unsung Heroes* tells the story of over 60 family carers from the South East who came together to form a choir.

Filmed over a six month period by Tyrone Productions with the support of Family Carers Ireland, the programme tracks the journey of the group as they grew in confidence as a choir under the tutelage of world renowned conductor and choirmaster David Brophy, shared experiences of being a family carer, supported one another and formed life-long friendships.

Among the family carers featured was Jane Johnstone who invited David Brophy into her home for 24 hours to allow him to gain a greater insight into the role she plays as sole full-time carer of her two sons Evan and Daniel, both of whom have autism.

The documentary featured many more inspirational family carers including Betty and Phil Power, who care for their beloved son Jason who has cerebral palsy, and teenager Matthew McCartin, the youngest member of the choir, who spoke about helping his mother Martina care for his dad Eddie who had dementia and Parkinson's. Sadly, Eddie has passed away since the programme aired.

Family carer Hannah Power spoke candidly about caring for her husband of almost 50 years Patrick who has Alzheimer's and what the choir has meant to her:

*"I never thought at this stage of my life I would find or get what I'm getting from this choir. Everybody's eyes are smiling now... When you are dealing with the person you are looking after, you are not always smiling."*

The programme culminated in a stunning performance as the choir joined singer-songwriters Gavin James, Eleanor McEvoy and John Spillane on stage at a packed National Opera House. Among the songs performed was "Real Heroes Go *Unsung*" - a song about the realities of being a family carer - which was co-written by John Spillane and choir members.

#UnsungHeroes became the top trending hashtag on Twitter in Ireland during the broadcast of the concluding episode while the documentary has received widespread acclaim since airing.



## BRAND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Family Carers Ireland brand took to the small screen in November 2020 with a two week self-identification campaign. Running from November 23rd until December 6th across Virgin Media TV, the campaign encompassed two emotive 50 second adverts featuring family carers Brenda O'Connell-Barry, Rosemary Kratschmar, Maureen Kelleher and Sinead Tighe.

*Our tagline "No one should have to care alone" was reinforced throughout the campaign with a final call to action to visit our*

*website or contact our National Freephone Careline as "Family Carers Ireland is here to help".*

The ads, which were proudly supported by Netwatch, aired during some of the most-watched shows across Virgin Media One, Two and Three.



# Twist & SHINE

FCI's national fundraising day Shine a Light is traditionally held in June and plays a vital role in raising awareness of Ireland's 500,000 family carers and much-needed funds to help us support them.

In previous years, we have organised events the length and breadth of the country and sold our heart-shaped pins through our network of Carer Support Centres and with the help of staff, family carers and volunteers through on-street collections.

Unfortunately due to Covid-19, none of this was possible in 2020 so our national fundraising day went online for the very first time as we tapped into Ireland's love of music and dance and asked the public to Twist & Shine in support of Ireland's family carers.

The fundraiser took the form of a viral social media campaign with people encouraged to put on their dancing shoes, do the twist to Chubby Checkers' Let's Twist Again, record a ten second video and upload it to social media or WhatsApp, donate €4 to FCI by text and tag four friends asking them to do likewise.

We received countless fantastic videos on the day from family carers, our own staff, supporters and businesses twisting in support of family carers and shared these widely across our social media channels.

The event was a great success and we wish to sincerely thank everyone who got involved for their support during a particularly challenging year for fundraising activities.



Staff, family and friends twisting in support of FCI

## Life Is A Beautiful Dance

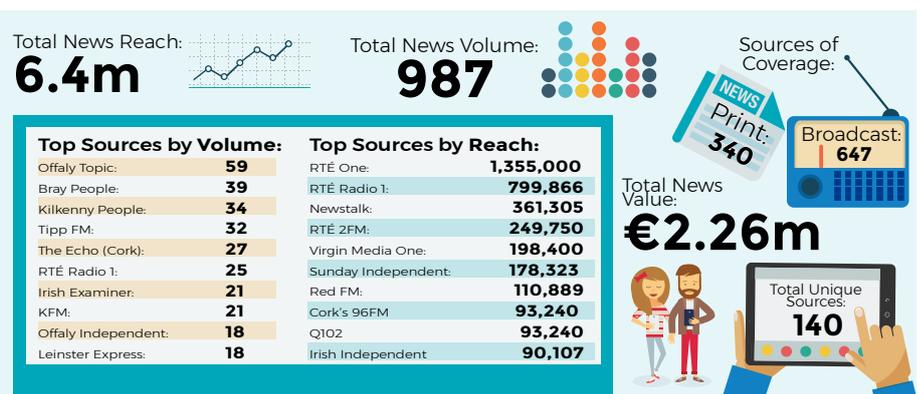
In the lead up to Christmas 2020, Family Carers Ireland patron and TV star Mary Kennedy released a charity single with her sister Deirdre called Life is a Beautiful Dance to raise funds for FCI. The song was penned for Mary by close friend Don Mescall who was inspired by her stint on Dancing with the Stars and Mary says she chose to raise money for FCI because it is a charity which is "close to my heart".

*We would like to sincerely thank Mary, Deirdre and Don for their support.*



# FAMILY CARERS IN THE MEDIA

As an organisation, Family Carers Ireland strives to keep the family carer at the centre of everything we do and say. This is particularly relevant in our work with the media. We present individual family carers' stories to reflect the reality of their lives. We recognise and celebrate their commitment and love for the people that they care for whilst also highlighting the many challenges that they face in doing this work. We shine a light on caring in Ireland in the hope that family carers will be recognised, supported and empowered in their roles.



2020 was a year like no other in terms of media coverage for family carers and Family Carers Ireland. January saw us prepare for the General Election with the launch of our GE2020 campaign. This kicked off with Virgin Media TV's Real Lives series featuring a number of family carers telling their stories and outlining what they wanted to see in a new programme for Government.

Following the publication of a letter to the editor of the Irish Times outlining our election asks, the paper ran a Life as a Carer series from January to March which was crucial in terms of shining a light on family caring in Ireland but also influencing the content of the upcoming programme for government.

Unfortunately in March 2020, the nation was faced with the brutal realities of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns were implemented in an effort to protect the most vulnerable. For FCI, this was the start of our fight for PPE, priority testing and contingency plans for family carers across the country.

As lockdown and restrictions continued, we lobbied with the support of the media for the safe re-opening of day centres for adults and older persons with disabilities/illness and special schools for children with special educational needs and for family carers to be included as a priority group for vaccinations.

Below is a snapshot of media coverage of family carers over this very difficult year.

## JANUARY

- FCI's election priorities were outlined by our Head of Communications and Carer Engagement Catherine Cox in a letter to the editor published by the Irish Times and in an opinion piece published by the Irish Daily Star.
- Virgin Media TV News aired separate interviews with a number of family carers as part of its Real Lives with Zara King series. Among those to feature was 2018 Cavan Carer of the Year Austin Hands who cares for his daughter Emma who has Angelman Syndrome. Austin spoke about the lack of supports and services for families in general and the fact that they were being asked to pay for Emma's bus to her day centre.



Austin Hands and his daughter Emma

## FEBRUARY

- The Irish Times published a number of articles by journalist Jen Hogan as part of its Life as a Carer series. Among those interviewed was Ciara Reid from Dublin who shared her story of caring for her daughter Réiltín who has Down Syndrome and is profoundly deaf. Ciara also spoke of helping her siblings to care for her elderly parents.
- Pamela McCormack whose daughter Amelie has Rett syndrome spoke to Morning Ireland (RTÉ Radio 1) about General Election issues for family carers in the Cavan-Monaghan constituency including a lack of respite.

## MARCH

- 2018 National Carer of the Year Brenda O'Connell-Barry from Cork, who cares for her son Fionn who has a rare genetic mutational condition, shared her concerns with the Irish Examiner about what would happen to her little boy should she fall ill with Covid-19.
- Sinead Tighe from Dublin spoke to Newstalk Breakfast about caring for her son Daniel who has Sotos syndrome and the importance of respite as a "mental health break" for family carers.



Brenda O'Connell-Barry and her son Fionn

## APRIL

- Family carer Ann Norton from Clare shared her experience of being diagnosed with Covid-19 and having to isolate from her daughter Nicole who has cerebral palsy and requires 24/7 care during an interview on This Week (RTÉ Radio 1).
- Virgin Media TV News broadcast a package featuring Meath family carer Tracy Carroll and FCI's Catherine Cox. Tracy outlined her experience of caring during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown for daughter Willow who suffers from spastic quadriplegia, cerebral palsy and epilepsy.



Tracy Carroll and her daughter Willow

## MAY

- The launch of FCI's research report – Caring through Covid: Life in Lockdown – secured coverage across national media including from Today with Sarah McInerney (RTE Radio 1), Virgin Media TV News and The Irish Examiner.
- In a letter to the editor published by The Irish Independent, Aisling McNiffe from Kildare, who cares 24/7 for her son Jack, said family carers "have been forgotten" during the Covid-19 crisis.

## JUNE

- David Brophy's *Unsung Heroes*, a two-part documentary featuring a choir of inspirational family carers, aired on RTÉ One.
- FCI's Young Carer Development Manager Pdraig McGrath spoke to The Irish Independent about the challenges facing young people balancing education with caring responsibilities in an article about online courses offered as part of the Higher Education for All initiative

## JULY

- Family carers Damien Douglas, Teena Gates, Jane Johnstone and Sharon Myers spoke to Brendan O'Connor (RTÉ Radio 1) about the cuts to essential supports and services during the pandemic and their concerns about the effects on those for whom they care.
- Virgin Media TV News captured the moment that Dublin teenager Jack O Donovan, who lives with cerebral palsy, crossed the finish line after completing an extraordinary 5km fundraiser for FCI and the Central Remedial Clinic.

## AUGUST

- The launch of FCI's Emergency Scheme was covered by national media including RTÉ Radio 1, the Irish Times, the Irish Examiner, the Irish Daily Mail and Newstalk.



Family carer Moira Skelly (front centre) helps launch FCI's Emergency Scheme

## SEPTEMBER

- Liz O'Neill, who cares for her two daughters Emma and Katie who both have an intellectual disability, spoke to the Irish Independent about life in lockdown and the impact of school and day service closures
- In an interview on Drivetime (RTÉ Radio 1), FCI's Catherine Cox raised "huge concerns" about the home support provisions announced by the HSE in its Winter Plan.

## OCTOBER

- The Prime Time (RTÉ 1) coverage of Budget 2021 included an interview with Carol Conneely from Galway who described a 41 cent per day increase in the Carer's Support Grant as "highly insulting". Carol cares for her severely disabled son Shane.
- Today with Claire Byrne (RTÉ Radio 1) interviewed FCI's Catherine Cox following the launch of our State of Caring report. The report's findings were also reported on by national media including the Irish Examiner and the Irish Sun.

## NOVEMBER

- The launch of the Every Picture Tells a Story photo exhibition at IMMA was covered in depth by Six One (RTÉ 1) and included interviews with some of the family carers featured.
- Patrick Dunne, who cares for his daughter Amy who is non-verbal and uses a wheelchair, spoke to the Irish Examiner about how the transition to adult services had worsened during the pandemic.

## DECEMBER

- Teenagers Sean Collins and Alex Ojoi, who both care for family members, were interviewed on Drivetime (RTÉ Radio 1) alongside FCI's Catherine Cox following the publication of a research report by FCI highlighting the urgent need to support young carers.
- Family carer Moira Skelly, who cares for her daughter Ciara, was interviewed on Prime Time (RTÉ 1) about the exclusion of carers from the Covid-19 vaccine priority list.

# POLICY & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Family Carers Ireland's vision is to create an Ireland in which family carers are respected and recognised for the contribution they make to families, communities and Irish society; where they feel valued, supported and are empowered to have a life of their own alongside their caring role. Our work to influence and advance carer policy and our engagement with Government and key stakeholders is critical to the achievement of this. FCI's policy and public affairs agenda is grounded in the reality of family carers' experiences and supported with evidence through our programme of research.

## POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

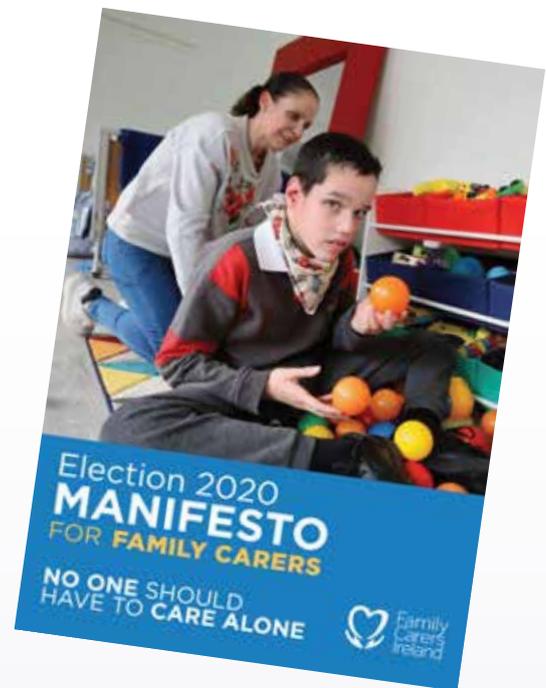
- Delivery of a **General Election campaign 'A Decade Lost'** calling on election candidates to endorse ten pledges for carers should they be elected to Dáil Éireann.
- Secured a number of ambitious commitments for family carers within the Programme for Government including the publication of a refreshed National Carers' Strategy; extension of the Carer's GP Visit Card to those in receipt of the Carer's Support Grant; delivery of a 'Carers Guarantee' to ensure family carers can access supports regardless of where they live and the development of a pension solution for long-term family carers.
- Engagement with the Department of Social Protection to secure family carers eligibility for Covid-19 supports including the Pandemic Unemployment Payment for those in receipt of Carer's Allowance or Carer's Benefit who lost their employment due to the pandemic.
- Budget announcement that the Carer's Support Grant will increase from €1,700 to €1,850.
- Proposal submitted to the Department of Health on the actions that could be included in a refreshed National Carers' Strategy and aligned to Programme for Government commitments.
- Funding of €2m provided to the HSE for the development of a National Carers' Strategy.
- Collaboration with the Department of Health and the Homecare Coalition on the introduction of a statutory homecare scheme in 2022 and the delivery of a pilot scheme in 2021.
- Established a new **Research and Policy Committee** within FCI.
- Family Carers Ireland accepted as a nominating body on **Seanad Éireann's Administrative Panel**.
- **EU Directive on Work Life Balance for Parents and Carers**, which legislates for the introduction of a minimum of five days of carers' leave each year for family carers in employment and the right to flexible working for the purpose of providing care, entered into European law and must be transposed into Irish law by

August 2022.

- Publication of the **CSO Irish Health Survey 2019** showed almost 13 per cent of respondents provide regular, unpaid care. If extrapolated to the national population aged over 15 years, it means Ireland has approximately 500,000 family carers.

## GENERAL ELECTION 2020

On February 8th, the Irish people went to the polls to vote in the General Election. Family Carers Ireland's General Election manifesto - *A Decade Lost* - called on each political party and election candidate to indicate whether, if they formed part of the next Government, they would commit to delivering 10 pledges for family carers over the life of that government.



## Meet Barbara

Family carer Barbara from Wexford cares for her son John who is aged 25 and has ASD and intellectual disability. Both Barbara and her son John were suffering emotionally and physically as a result of lockdown in August 2020. John's sleep patterns in particular had deteriorated resulting in poor sleep for both him and his Mum. With the support of Irish Life funding, Family Carers Ireland were able to finance one week of residential respite for John. This provided him with a change in scene and routine and his Mum Barbara with a much needed break from her caring role and the opportunity to catch up on much needed sleep. FCI also funded bed-wear for John as well as transport to and from the respite facility. Barbara has also been provided with 10 weeks free counselling support to help with her emotional well-being.

1

**Reform the means test for Carer's Allowance within the lifetime of the next government, by:**

- Increasing the Carer's Allowance income disregard from €332.50 to €450 (single) and €665 to €900 (couple) by 2025.
- Increasing the capital disregard from €20,000 to €50,000 in line with the existing disregard for Disability Allowance.

2

**Introduce legislation to provide a statutory basis for homecare and incorporate a guarantee of basic supports to family carers who provide 80% of all community care.**

- Urgently address the homecare crisis by significantly increasing homecare funding
- Give full-time carers a right to a Carer Needs Assessment and 20 days respite each year.
- Abolish the postcode lottery in carer supports by funding the delivery of the 'Carers Guarantee' of €3.2m.

3

**Extend the GP Visit Card to carers in receipt of the Carer's Support Grant.**

4

**Introduce the Transport Support Scheme promised since 2013 and ensure that existing transport schemes are accessible to people who need them in spite of not having a visible disability.**

5

**Reform the system of tax reliefs and credits for carers by:**

- increasing the Dependent Relative tax credit to match the Incapacitated Child tax credit
- extending eligibility for the Home Carer Tax Credit to include single working carers
- allowing carers to claim tax relief on the cost of employing a home carer if incurring this expense at the same time as claiming the Dependent Relative/Incapacitated Child tax credit
- making Carer's Allowance exempt from tax as is the case with other income supports such as Jobseeker's Allowance, Disability Allowance and Working Family Payment.

6

**Ensure that 'just transition' provisions are applied to family carers who are being penalised for unavoidable costs under the polluter pays principle e.g. waste charges and carbon tax.**

7

**Make appropriate transition arrangements for family carers on commencement of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 in line with those being made for the state's own Wards of Court system.**

8

**Abolish waiting lists for essential therapies including Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Psychology for children with special needs.**

- Give children with a disability and their parents the right to key worker
- Give sick children living in hospital access to the Domiciliary Care Allowance.

9

**Publish a refreshed National Carers' Strategy Action Plan 2020-2023.**

10

**Deliver on pay restoration for organisations funded under section 39 of the Health Act (as promised in 2017) and undertake not to discriminate against charities that are not unionised in future pay decisions in regard to the voluntary sector.**



Roscommon Carer Supports Manager Bernie Dowling (fourth from left) pictured with General Election candidates at a local hustings event

All political parties and election candidates, as well as sitting TDs, MEPs and Senators, were sent a copy of FCI's election manifesto and invited to discuss the 10 pledges with their local Carer Supports Manager. A number of regional hustings events were also held, allowing family carers to question election candidates about the support they would provide for carers should they be elected.

Postcard sized 'Canvass Cards' were also circulated to the homes of family carers across the country outlining a number of the key questions they could put to candidates canvassing door to door.



FCI Policy and Public Affairs Manager Clare Duffy addressing a hustings event in Roscommon

A Political Party Commitment Card was sent to each political party asking them to confirm whether they would commit to any or all of the ten pledges set out in FCI's manifesto should they be elected to form the next Government. A response was received from all parties. Family Carers Ireland believes this process helped secure a number of important commitments for family carers within the Programme for Government.

## PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

Negotiations to form a new Government following the General Election continued for some 130 days with a Programme for Government (PfG) finally agreed by Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party on June 15th.

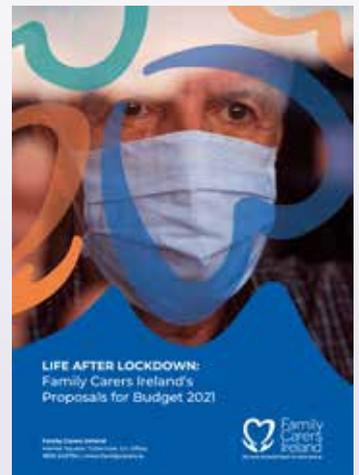
The PfG 'Our Shared Future' recognises family carers 'as the backbone of care provision in Ireland... who deserve support and recognition from Government' (p76) and sets out a number of ambitious targets to support them. These commitments include:

- Examine options for a *pension solution for carers*, the majority women, particularly those of incapacitated children in recognition of the enormous value of the work carried out by them (p75).
- Deliver a '*Carers Guarantee*' proposal that will provide a core basket of services to carers across the country regardless of where they live (p50).
- Extend free GP care to carers in receipt of the Carer's Support Grant (p46; p76).
- Provide *additional residential places* and new emergency residential placements for people with a disability (p92).
- Introduce a statutory scheme to support people to live in their own homes which will provide equitable access to high quality, regulated home care (p50).
- *Increase homecare* hours (p44).
- Expand primary and community care, in line with Sláintecare, making the vast majority of healthcare *services available in the home or close to home*, rather than in our hospitals (p45).
- Ensure each child with a special educational need has an *appropriate school place* in line with their constitutional right (p96).
- Reduce *waiting times for assessment of need* under the Disability Act 2005 (p78).
- Extend the *National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) to secure timely assessment* for child and adult psychological services (p49).
- Increase the *Homecare Tax Credit* (p24).
- Provide *additional respite* nights to people with disabilities (p79).
- Introduce a *cap on the maximum daily charge for car parking* for patients and visitors at all public hospitals and introduce flexible passes in all public hospitals for patients and their families (p44).

## BUDGET 2021: LIFE AFTER LOCKDOWN

Budget 2021, announced on October 13th, was preceded by a four month pre-budget campaign which included the dissemination of Family Carers Ireland's pre-budget submission 'Life After Lockdown' to family carers, politicians and policymakers across the country.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we were unable to host the usual national and regional events which are a feature of the annual budget campaign, however a virtual budget briefing took place on October 6th and was attended by a range



of politicians and stakeholders. The Department of Social Protection decided to go ahead with their annual budget briefing, which took place on July 30th in Dublin Castle and included over 50 organisations from the community and voluntary sector including FCI.

The theme of the Budget campaign focused on the implications of Covid-19 on family carers. The withdrawal of supports such as homecare, respite, personal assistance hours and residential care, forced many carers to care alone, around the clock and without the support of extended family or friends. Parents of children with a disability lost the routine and relief of school, day services and essential therapies placing the child at serious risk of regression. Older carers and those with underlying health conditions were expected to cocoon; isolated and reliant on others. Even carers who were coping relatively well prior to the pandemic found themselves mentally and physically drained and struggling to maintain their caring role. Through the budget campaign, FCI called on the newly-elected Government to use Budget 2021 as a first step towards honouring the PfG commitments and delivering on a number of critical policy areas, including:

### Recognise family carers as unique within the social welfare system

- Increase Carer's Allowance income disregard to ensure those on an average industrial wage qualify.
- Recognise costs of caring in the deductions allowable for Carer's Allowance and assess income on net rather than gross value.
- Increase the €20,000 disregard to €50,000 in the Capital Formula.
- Increase the Carer's Support Grant from €1,700 to €2,000.
- Extend eligibility for Carer's Benefit to include people who are self-employed.
- Extend eligibility for Domiciliary Care Allowance to children residing in hospital.
- Develop a pension solution for family carers that recognises their important work.

### Support people to be cared for at home

- Deliver a 'Carers Guarantee' to provide a basket of services to carers across the country.
- Increase homecare hours and introduce a Statutory Homecare Scheme.
- Extend the Carer GP Visit Card to those in receipt of the Carer's Support Grant.
- Introduce the long-awaited Transport Support Scheme.
- Extend the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) to abolish waiting lists for essential therapies for children with a disability.
- Resumption of disability services including respite following lockdown.

- Review and update of the National Carers' Strategy.

### Reform the system of tax reliefs and credits available to family carers

- Increase the Dependent Relative Tax Credit in line with the Incapacitated Child Tax Credit
- Extend eligibility for the Home Carer Tax Credit to include single working carers
- Allow carers to claim tax relief on the cost of employing a care worker while also claiming the Dependent Relative/Incapacitated Child tax credit.

## BUDGET 2021: SUMMARY OF KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Increase in the annual Carer's Support Grant from €1,700 to €1,850 (June 2021)
- Increase for a Qualified Child by €5 for children over 12 and by €2 for children under 12 (Jan 2021)
- Pension age will not increase to 67 but will remain at 66 pending the findings of the Commission on Pensions
- Christmas Bonus paid to those on social welfare for four months or more including PUP recipients
- Increase in earnings disregard for Disability Allowance from €120 to €140 per week (June 2021)
- Increase in Living Alone Allowance of €5 from €14 to €19 per week (Jan 2021)
- Fuel Allowance increase by €3.50 per week to €28 (Jan 2021)
- Grant of up to €500 will be paid for hearing aids without requiring it to be matched by the customer. Hearing Aid repairs of up to €100 no longer require matching funding by the customer.
- Widowed parents with dependent children to receive €8,000 grant - up from €2,000 (Jan 2021)

### HEALTH

- Additional €4bn in health funding
- Additional €100m for new disability measures including the resumption of disability services
- Five million additional home care hours, aimed to help alleviate community waiting lists for home care, as well as supporting hospital avoidance and delayed discharges
- €38m to implement the National Mental Health Strategy 'Sharing the Vision'
- Additional 1,146 acute beds in 2021
- 1,250 additional community care beds including 600 rehabilitation beds
- Increase in the number of critical care beds, from 255 pre-Covid-19, to 321 by the end of 2021
- Additional 80 occupational, speech and behavioral therapists
- 16,000 additional posts across the healthcare sector

- Additional €30m for the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) to address hospital waiting times

## TAXATION

- Increase in Dependent Relative Tax Credit from €70 to €275.
- Establishment of a Commission on Taxation and Welfare

## EDUCATION

- 990 additional SNAs bringing total to 18,000 in 2021
- Additional 145 Special Education Teachers bring total to 17,000

## POLICY PAPERS, SUBMISSIONS & SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Family Carers Ireland regularly contributes to public consultations in relation to a variety of issues that affect family carers. We also develop position papers on important and emergent issues. FCI contributed the following papers and submissions during 2020:

- A Guide to Covid-19 Social Welfare Support for Family Carers.
- Contribution to the HSE: 'Mind the Gap: Practical considerations with regard to the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act from the Perspective of Family Carers'.
- Submission to the Joint Committee on Disability Matters on the lived experience of people with a disability and their family carers.
- Submission to the Department of Justice and Equality on Flexible Working
- Proposal to the Department of Health on the development of a National Carers' Strategy aligned to PfG commitments.
- Engagement with regard to practical issues for consideration in the Cost of Disability study undertaken by Indecon on behalf of the Department of Social Protection.
- Joint position paper with members of the Homecare Coalition entitled 'Working towards a Statutory Homecare Scheme: Experiences from the Grassroots'.
- Co-production with the HSE and Inclusion Ireland on Frequently Asked Questions for People with Disabilities and Family Carers during Covid-19.
- Contributed to the UCD CAREWELL Project's paper on 'An Exploration of the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Employment for Family Carers'.

## REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL COMMITTEES

Core to our policy and public affairs work is ensuring that the voice of family carers is included in the deliberations of

relevant policy and strategic groups. Family Carers Ireland is proud to represent family carers on a number of national committees including:

- Community and Voluntary Pillar of Social Partnership, including Department of Health Linkage Group and the Department of Social Protection Linkage Group
- Homecare Coalition - 23 NGOs working collectively to ensure the implementation of an adequately-resourced, person-centred statutory home care scheme
- Department of Social Protection Review Group for Domiciliary Care Allowance
- HSE Subgroup on the Development of Codes of Practice on Advance Healthcare Directives
- HSE National Patient Forum
- Eurocarers Policy Working Group
- Eurocarers Research Working Group
- Eurocarers Young Carers Working Group
- UCD CAREWELL Project for Working Carers

### Meet Lily

Jane has an intellectual disability. She lives independently and attends a day service Monday to Friday but also receives a lot of support from her elderly mother, Lily. When Covid-19 hit, her mother had to cocoon so she was unable to call to see Jane while the day service also closed leaving Jane very isolated and finding it difficult to manage day-to-day tasks.

With the support of Irish Life funding, FCI provided a home care worker to help Jane in the house and provide much-needed companionship to her. Jane really benefited from the service and her mother felt more at ease knowing someone was calling to check on her.

### Meet Declan

Declan's five year old daughter Sibéal suffers from a rare genetic disorder and is non-verbal, PEG-fed and requires 24/7 care. When her day service closed due to the pandemic, Declan was concerned that she would regress and become agitated without her hydrotherapy sessions which are invaluable to Sibéal's day-to-day health. Physio also stopped due to the pandemic so any support that had been available to Declan was now non-existent.

After discussing their immediate needs with FCI, it was decided to purchase a special hydrotherapy bath with the support of Irish Life funding and Sibéal now enjoys her hydrotherapy sessions at home every day. These sessions help to ease her agitations and keep her calm.

# RESEARCH

Throughout 2020, Family Carers Ireland focused on utilising findings from research to raise awareness of family carers and ensuring the inclusion of their voice through building partnerships with external research institutions, while also prioritising internal research and evaluation projects.

## STATE OF CARING 2020

In the winter of 2019/2020 before the outbreak of Covid-19, Family Carers Ireland undertook Ireland’s first national State of Caring survey. Completed by some 1,250 family carers in online and paper form, the survey’s findings paint a stark picture of their lives pre-Covid-19, with many struggling financially, facing indebtedness and without access to essential supports.

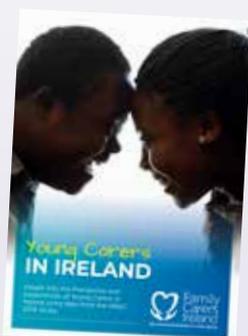


Before the findings of the State of Caring survey were published, the Covid-19 pandemic reached Ireland and the situation facing family carers when they completed the survey suddenly became very different. In response, Family Carers Ireland made the decision to extend the State of Caring research to include a special module on family carers’ experience of ‘Caring Through Covid’ – the challenges they face, their worries and concerns and their suggestions on how frontline service

providers and Government should respond to meet their needs. Some 1,307 people responded to this online survey between 14th April and 5th May.

The ‘State of Caring 2020’ report, which incorporates the findings from both surveys to shine a light on family carers’ lives before and during Covid-19, was launched on 6th October via a live webinar. The launch was attended by 90 people from a diverse range of backgrounds, including family carers, politicians, policymakers, researchers, charitable organisations and members of the media. Findings have also been presented to the Department of Social Protection and Eurocarers.

## YOUNG CARERS IN IRELAND REPORT



Family Carers Ireland launched the Young Carers in Ireland: Insight into the Prevalence and Experiences of Young Carers in Ireland using data from the HBSC 2018 Study report in December 2020. The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study is a cross-national representative research study conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe.



Key findings from the State of Caring 2020 report

The survey, which is completed by the young person themselves, included a question on caring in 2014 and 2018. At the request of Family Carers Ireland, researchers at NUI Galway analysed a number of indicators relevant to young carers.



Key findings from the Young Carers in Ireland report

## BEHAVIOUR & ATTITUDES RESEARCH

Behaviours & Attitudes were commissioned in 2019 by Family Carers Ireland to conduct a representative survey to:

- Establish awareness of the Family Carers Ireland brand
- Investigate understanding of FCI's role and the services provided
- Identify those who define themselves as a carer and those that care but are 'relationship defined'
- Assess awareness and effectiveness of previous campaigns

In January 2019, face-to-face computer-assisted interviews were conducted with 1,000 adults. The survey was repeated in December 2020 with 1,044 adults. Although fieldwork was previously face-to-face for this project, Covid-19 restrictions meant that an online methodology was more appropriate. Despite this change in methods, there is scope for comparison between the two surveys across a number of areas.

### Carer Prevalence

- 2020: 12% of Irish adults identified themselves as family carers. This rises to 17% among those aged 35-50. It is an increase of 2% on 2019 estimates and is in line with the CSO's Irish Health Survey 2019, which found that 12.58% of the Irish population identify as carers.
- There has been an increase in young carers, with 15% of carers (n=389) stating that a child under 18 supported them with caring tasks. Only 1% reported that children helped them provide support in 2019. This is likely due to the change in methods between the two surveys. Parents may have been reluctant to disclose their child's caring role when the survey was administered face-to-face, due to a fear of stigmatisation or concerns about privacy, whereas they may have felt more comfortable disclosing their child's caring role in a self-completion survey.

### Family Carers Ireland - Home Care Services: Awareness And Positioning

- When asked about their awareness of the different companies providing home care services, 23% of respondents reported awareness of FCI in 2020 when shown the company brand. This remained unchanged from 2019.
- FCI has improved significantly between 2019 and 2020 in terms of being the company respondents would most likely approach if they needed to access home care supports for a family member (8% and 25% respectively).
- However, the Carers Association also improved in terms of approachability, suggesting that the original Carers Association branding is difficult to shift.

### Brand Relevance

- When a description of FCI as a national charity providing support and services for family carers is tabled, 26% believe the service is relevant to them.

- One in five (20%) adults believe they will need assistance of some kind of home care services in the next five years with a further 9% believing they will need to assist someone who is coming out of hospital. This has increased from 2019 (13% and 4% respectively).
- The likely source of information in seeking assistance is the GP followed by the HSE website as well public health nurses (the latter two have grown significantly since the previous measure).

### FCI Campaign Awareness

- Over one in four of those aware of FCI (n=445) know that the organisation supports and advises family carers. The understanding that FCI supports carers has improved between the two years across a number of indicators.
- Respondents were asked if they recalled seeing or hearing anything about three campaigns (David Brophy's Choir of Unsung Heroes - RTE1; brand TV ad - Virgin; 'Every Picture Tells a Story' fundraising campaign. Each of the campaigns have been seen by approximately 20% of adults and 40% had awareness of any of the campaigns.

### Understanding Of Rights And The Circumstances Of Family Carers \*Questions Only Asked In 2020

- 42% believe that long-term residential care is a statutory right and 31% believe that home-delivered services are for all Irish citizens.
- There is an acknowledgment that family carers are in a very precarious position with three quarters of the view that carers can become isolated because they struggle to access respite and support services.
- Interestingly, as many as 47% hold the view that family carers receive financial payment from the State. 15% hold the view that family carers are paid like professional carers by the State or the HSE. The balance have no idea or don't believe this is the case.

### Preferences for long-term care \*questions only asked in 2020

- When asked what their key concerns would be if they had to take a more active role in caring, 18% worry if they would be able to do that job well. They also raised concerns about access to respite, financial concerns and their ability to deal with mobility tasks.
- The strong preference in terms of care as people look forward is to provide a mixture of family and friends along with professional care staff with services delivered to the home.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Family Carers Ireland has continued to develop key research partnerships, most notably with academics from University

College Dublin, University College Cork, National University of Ireland Galway and Trinity College Dublin. These relationships have resulted in several collaborative project ideas including drafting co-authored papers.

The Royal College of Surgeons Ireland were previously supported by the organisation in a successful application to the Health Research Board for a Knowledge Exchange and Dissemination (KEDS) grant for the StrokeCog project. A pre-recorded presentation was arranged for a conference on the family impact of stroke that involves post-stroke cognitive impairment or dementia. FCI also participated in grant applications for multiple research projects.

FCI continues to sit on the executive committees for UCD Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) Ignite and the Promoting Assisted Decision-Making in Acute Settings (PADMACS) project and remain research partners with UCD on the CAREWELL project which aims to develop a workplace-based programme to promote health and self-care behaviours among working family carers.

Engagement with Eurocarers also continued in 2020, with Head of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships Dr Kathy McLoughlin appointed as Vice-President for Research. FCI also presented the 'Caring Through Covid' findings at the annual Eurocarers Research Working Group meeting at the end of the year.

The Family Carers Ireland Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) Panel was established in July 2020. This panel is a small group of family carers who are interested in getting involved in carer-related research as co-researchers. These 'experts by experience' have received training from academics at UCD so they can influence, advise and work with researchers across Ireland. At the end of 2020, two members of the panel were involved in research with researchers from the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland while researchers from institutions across Ireland are increasingly expressing interest in engaging with members of the group.

FCI continued to regularly promote external research projects to family carers in 2020 via social media platforms and by contacting individuals who expressed an interest in research. The projects FCI has supported include a study on medication safety with Trinity College Dublin.

## Meet Philomena

Family carer Philomena has been caring for her mother who has Alzheimer's for over 10 years. In July 2020 Phil's sister Joyce got married in a small family ceremony. It was very important to the family that their mother would be able to attend the wedding but it was logistically difficult and costly. In order to do this and stay overnight at the hotel, Phil's mother, her hoist and wheelchair had to be transported to the hotel the morning of the wedding and returned home the following day with Phil by her side. Family Carers Ireland were able to fund this operation which as the family told us "meant the absolute world to them". Without this financial support, neither Phil nor her Mam would have been able to attend this family event.

## Meet Mary

Family carer Mary from County Clare cares for her daughter Jane aged 21. Jane has a very complex medical condition which includes severe learning disability, autism, epilepsy, scoliosis and is also on oxygen. She requires 24/7 care and attention. Covid-19 has been extremely challenging for the family and Jane's toileting in particular has regressed. This caused huge upset to both Jane and Mary. For Jane it affected her dignity, as she now needed help with this very personal function and for Mary, who is a much smaller build than Jane, it caused a very significant physical strain as well as great tension. Family Carers Ireland through the support of Irish Life Funds purchased a Gerberit Aqua Clean Electronic toilet and shower system which has provided huge respite to the entire family. On good days, it allows Jane to toilet and shower by herself maintaining her dignity and on more difficult days, Mary can support her without the physical strain and tension that was previously present. This piece of equipment has made a real difference to this family's day to day lives.

The real names of family members have been changed for confidentiality reasons.



# PUBLIC FUNDING & SUPPORT

Family Carers Ireland would like to kindly acknowledge the funding and support of partners below, who make the lives of family carers all over Ireland better everyday.

We greatly appreciate your support.



**An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí**  
Department of Social Protection



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive



**An Roinn Comhshaoil,  
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide**  
Department of the Environment,  
Climate and Communications



**An Roinn Sláinte**  
Department of Health



ciste na  
gcuntas díomhaoin  
the dormant  
accounts fund



**An Roinn Tithíochta, Pleanála,  
Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil**  
Department of Housing, Planning,  
Community and Local Government



# CORPORATE FUNDERS

Support in the form of corporate donations and volunteering are critical to FCI and these have never been more important than in 2020 with Covid-19 and all the challenges that it has brought. We wish to say a huge **Thank You** to all our donors for joining with us to respond to this crisis. We have felt both supported and humbled by your generosity and kindness over the past twelve months. The impact that your support has had on family carers' lives is simply incredible. From funding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for family carers, putting oil in tanks, food on tables, purchasing essential equipment, providing counselling to family carers most in need and funding respite hours for carers in crisis – you have our **deepest gratitude**. We simply could not have done it without you!



**MOON+MELLOW**

Thank you also to all of the individuals, sports clubs, businesses, groups and everyone who has raised money for FCI. Your walks, runs, mountain climbs, baking, mask making and more are hugely appreciated and we look forward to working with you all in the future.



# MEET OUR DIRECTORS



## Robert Anderson

Robert Anderson is recently retired Head of the Social Policies unit at Eurofound, where he has worked as research manager since 1988 on a range of topics relating to living conditions and quality of life, including several international research projects exploring aspects of family care across Europe. Prior to joining Eurofound, Rob worked as Programme Manager at the WHO European Office in Copenhagen, with responsibility for the European Regional Programme in Health Promotion. He studied human sciences at Oxford University, and sociology as applied to medicine at Bedford College, London. Rob served as President of Eurocarers from 2009 to 2012. Rob has been appointed chairperson of the Research & Policy committee.

## Veronica Baylon

Veronica is a carer to her 32 year old daughter who has a diagnosis of moderate learning disability and Asperger's. She has been dealing with behavioural issues, etc. since her daughter was very young. Veronica has been part of Family Carers Ireland in Monaghan/Cavan for the past 13 years and volunteers in the charity shop and drop-in centre.



## Triona Fortune



Triona is Managing Director of Fortune Quality Accreditation Services (FQAS) and works with governments all over the world to develop healthcare, accreditation, regulation and licensing programs. She also has over 20 years' senior executive management experience specialising in corporate and clinical governance. Triona continues her work with the World Health Organisation (WHO) as an Expert Advisor on various patient safety and quality initiatives. She teaches on numerous Masters Programmes, specialising in healthcare quality and is currently working with Trinity College Dublin and the Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. Commencing her healthcare career as a nurse and midwife, specialising in emergency care, she obtained her MSc. from Trinity College Dublin. Triona is the main carer for her brother Ted who has Motor Neurone Disease.

## Antoinette Greene

Antoinette is a retired paediatric nurse. Having practiced abroad for many years, she returned to Ireland to become the full-time family carer for her mother. She has been involved with Caring for Carers at local and national level since 2003 and is the chairperson of Family Carers Ireland's Milltown Malbay/Spanish Point carer group.



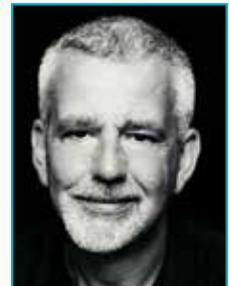


## Tom Jordan

Tom Jordan has been an Executive Coach for the past decade with a long list of blue-chip public and private clients at CEO and Director level. He was a board member (2007-2010) and Chairperson (2010-2016) of CORU (the Health and Social Care Professionals Council). He led the establishment of unrelated bone marrow full testing in Ireland in 1988 – this had become world standard by 2000. Tom currently chairs NAHVI which is a National Housing Association for visually impaired with intellectual disabilities.

## Graham Knowles

Graham Knowles originally trained as a Registered Mental Health Nurse in the UK. He held a variety of operational management and strategic roles in the NHS, including Acting Director of one of the largest Health Authorities in the Country. Until recently, Graham was the Chief Executive Officer of the Royal Hospital Donnybrook. He also currently serves as Chair of the Board of the UL Hospital Group. He is involved at Board and/or Committee level with various regulatory organisations, including the Medical Council and the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. Graham has an M.Sc. in Care Policy and Management from London Guildhall University and an M.B.A (Health Executive) from Keele University.



## Barbara Kovach

Barbara is the mother and full-time carer for her beautiful son Liam who is 20. Liam was born with Down Syndrome and a heart condition. Barbara has been a family carer since the young age of 12, helping together with her sisters to care for her Grandmother who was housebound due to a fall and also had Alzheimer's. Barbara also helped take care of their father who had terminal cancer and died in 1986. After moving back from the USA in 2009, she helped care for her mother until she passed away in 2011. Barbara is a very active member of Family Carers Ireland and helped to start a support group in Cashel.

## Rosemary Kratschmar

Rosemary, mum of four, together with her husband Siegi cares for her son Sammy who has Down Syndrome. Rosemary has been a strong advocate for family carers for many years and has worked closely with Family Carers Ireland in raising awareness and lobbying on behalf of carers across the country. She is also a member of FCI's Parents of Adults with Intellectual Disability (PAID) group.





## Cora Long

Cora Long has been a carer from an early age, caring for her father who had emphysema and her mother who had a stroke. In her early married years she also cared for her mother in law who had many health issues. She also looked after her husband for 9 years and now looks after her sister in law who has multiple health issues. Cora served on the board of Caring for Carers before and during the merger years. Presently she is chairperson of the East Clare support group and a member of the Member Services and Engagement Committee.

## Dr. Shane McCarthy

Shane has been a qualified Solicitor since 1999. Having managed his own practice for many years he has significant experience in regulation, governance, audit and risk management-all areas of particular interest to Family Carers Ireland. He is a member of the General Council of the Law Society of Ireland and a Council Member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland. Shane helped care for his father, who suffered from dementia, until he died and continues to be one of the carers for his mother who suffers from Parkinson's disease.



## Peter O'Connell

Peter has had a successful corporate career in sales and marketing internationally, having worked in Europe and Latin America, in addition to being accountable for leading consumer brands globally. He has been based in the U.K., Belgium, The Netherlands, Mexico and Ireland in key head of function and board positions. He currently runs his own business, Career Development Associates. Peter cared for his mother for the last three years of her life with the support of home care workers.

## Michael O'Neill

Michael is a Chartered Accountant and spent much of his career in public practice. He now holds a number of roles on a pro-bono basis and in commercial operations.





## Johanne Powell

Johanne cared for her daughter Siobhan who was born on 9th February, 1984 until her recent passing in August 2020. Siobhan was born with a rare chromosome disorder. She was intellectually and physically disabled, requiring 24/7 care. Johanne and her husband Alan were devoted to Siobhan who was their only child and spent years lobbying on behalf of Siobhan for the provision of services to cater for her needs.

## Eilish Smith

Eilish is one of the founding members of Caring for Carers Ireland and has for many years been involved with people with intellectual disabilities. Eilish has been organising respite weekends for carers for over 30 years. As a teacher, she ran a programme with transition year students in conjunction with the Mental Health Board which included a monthly social for parents and their children.



# DIRECTORS' REPORT 2020

The directors present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of Family Carers Ireland (FCI) for the year ended 31st December 2020



Figures published by the CSO in December 2020 from the Irish Health Survey 2019 estimates that 1 in 8 people in Ireland aged over 15 are family carers. Extrapolation to the national population estimates currently available suggests that approximately 500,000 people provide regular unpaid care. Previous estimates put this figure at 355,000.

## Key Objectives

Family Carers Ireland is the charity that asks the carer how they are. The key objective of the organisation is to benefit the community by supporting and promoting the health, wellbeing and quality of life of family carers and those for whom they care.

Our vision is an Ireland in which family carers are properly recognised, supported and empowered. Our mission is to highlight the contribution of family carers to Irish society and to improve the lives of family carers throughout the country. We believe that no one should have to care alone.

Our primary focus is not only on supporting the family carer as an individual in their own right but as a key contributor to the sustainability of our health system, saving the State €20bn annually in avoided health care costs.

We advocate on behalf of family carers at local, regional and national level along with lobbying and policy development in support of an all-inclusive National Carers' Strategy. The services and supports provided by Family Carers Ireland aim to improve and enrich the wellbeing of family carers through and beyond their caring journey by maximizing and nurturing partnerships and providing high quality, innovative programmes of appropriate, targeted and practical supports based on an identified need and risk.

Family Carers Ireland is an approved provider of home support services under the HSE scheme supporting the family carer and the cared-for person.

Family carers have played a hugely significant role in suppressing Covid-19 and supporting the health system, with carers continuing to care around the clock ensuring their loved ones stayed safe at home and out of hospital, all while the majority of their support system was shut down or curtailed.

Since March 2020, the organisation has had to completely innovate, adapt and develop new initiatives at great speed to ensure family carers were and continue to be supported during and beyond this unprecedented time in our lives due to Covid-19.



# ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

Family Carers Ireland had a very challenging but successful 2020. Covid-19 affected every aspect of what we do and how we do it, but we have risen to this exceptional time in history to continue to support family carers in communities the length and breadth of the country. The organisation has developed new programmes of support, new protocols in the delivery of essential home care services and enabled its office-based staff to work remotely with connected technology.

Although there is hope on the horizon with the arrival of a vaccine which is expected to be rolled out over the course of 2021, the delivery of our supports and services will continue to be impacted until this is implemented in full.

Throughout 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic presented a series of challenges across every aspect of our activities which we outline below:

## Existing Supports and Services:

Group and peer support meetings and face-to-face programmes were impossible for most of the year. We put a lot of effort into developing alternative communications channels – a significant increase in the number and duration of phone calls was supplemented with a weekly virtual Carers' Coffee Club that has become a popular source of information for many family carers as well as new online learning and social (e.g. Zoom Bingo, Chair Yoga) activities. Our engagement across social media now averages 100,000 contacts per month. Although our services are not restricted to members, we saw a 70% increase in membership during the year which is very encouraging.

## New threats to carer wellbeing and resilience:

As an unprecedented global crisis, Covid-19 generated many unexpected challenges and the initial policy response from the Government focused almost entirely on the over 75s, patients (i.e. both of hospitals and nursing homes) and front line health care workers, with little regard given to how Ireland's 500,000 family carers were being impacted in the home. It was left to Family Carers Ireland to source and distribute tens of thousands of essential PPE items from gloves and masks to hand sanitizer and aprons. Over 3,000 family carers who were unable to access them in the early stages of the pandemic from the State were able to receive free PPE from the organisation with thanks to corporate funding support. We also developed the free Emergency Care Scheme so that in the event of an emergency involving the family carer, the information can be accessed 24/7 and shared to support a safe transition of care to either named emergency contacts, voluntary or emergency services. In response to extraordinary levels of stress, we launched a range of psycho-social supports in partnership with Mental Health Ireland and began our own free telephone/online

counselling support. A new national Crisis Fund was also set up to provide practical, tangible support to families (food and clothing vouchers, unpaid bills, lack of equipment, emergency respite) whilst more sustainable supports were being negotiated with State agencies.

## Significant challenges in regard to income generation and expenditure control:

The Covid-19 crisis seriously impacted our traditional fundraising activities and whilst our public funding streams remained broadly stable, there was no adjustment in line with the sudden explosion of demand for our services. Staff flexibility allowed us to redeploy resources to maximum effect and we were fortunate to receive great support from a series of corporate donors – our 'National Crisis Fund' raised more than €500,000 for example. Support in cash and kind from Irish Life, Tesco, Brennan's Bread, Horizon Therapeutics and An Post, to name but a few, was critical in the early stages of the year.

## Changing policy discourse and policy focus:

We made sure that a wide range of issues affecting family carers were considered in the public policy response to the pandemic by direct engagement in consultative forums and also continuous media presence. It is also worth noting that the Programme for Government agreed in mid-2020 contained many positive commitments in terms of family carer issues, reflecting a strong lobbying campaign in advance of the General Election and during the negotiating period itself.

## Governance:

Family Carers Ireland is committed to the highest standards of corporate governance and in this context it is important to acknowledge the work involved in complying with changing government guidelines – requiring new protocols and training for 600 staff; IT infrastructure to enable working from home and, in due course, physical modifications across 22 offices – as well as governance challenges such as an online AGM.



# STRATEGIC PLAN: 2018 - 2023

## IMPROVE CARERS' LIVES

**KRA 1:** Family Carer Supports

**KRA 2:** Home Care Sevices

**KRA 3:** Public Policy Towards Family Carers

## HIGHLIGHT CARERS' CONTRIBUTION

**KRA 4:** Engaging With Family Carers

**KRA 5:** Shining A Light On The Realities Of Caring In Ireland

**KRA 6:** Making People Aware Of FCI And What We Offer

## GROW SUSTAINABLY

**KRA 7:** Optimise Resourses

**KRA 8:** Partnerships & Alliances

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND – KEY RESULTS AREA AGAINST OUR 2018-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

Our response to Covid-19 was informed by the long-term objectives set out in our Strategic Plan. The following table sets out our achievements in somewhat greater detail.

## KEY RESULT AREA 1 - FAMILY CARER SUPPORTS

Objective	Progress in 2020
Support for family carers is at the heart of why we exist. This plan envisages a fundamental review of what we do and how we do it and a sustained effort to ensure that these supports are equally accessible in every part of the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift to telephonic/online supports</li> <li>• Increase in the reach and range of activities</li> <li>• Embedding of the Quality Framework in our new supports</li> <li>• Distribution of individual family carer PPE packages</li> <li>• Launched the Emergency Plan 24/7 support service</li> <li>• Comprehensive carer well-being restoration initiative</li> </ul>

## KEY RESULT AREA 2 - HOME CARE SERVICES

Objective	Progress in 2020
Home Care and Home Help are key HSE services for patients in the home – we need to have practical expertise to lobby on policy and practice. Services make a significant contribution to our funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of Covid-19 Operations Management team</li> <li>• Development of policies, procedures and protocols in response to Covid-19</li> <li>• Delivery of additional respite hours through corporate funding</li> <li>• Resource planning for the next Home Care Services tender</li> </ul>

## KEY RESULT AREA 3 - PUBLIC POLICY TOWARDS FAMILY CARERS

Objective	Progress in 2020
Family carers need state supports that are effective and relevant to the reality of their circumstance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft refreshed Carer Strategy based on Programme for Government prepared and sent to Government officials</li> <li>• Ongoing engagement with Department of Health on statutory entitlement to home care</li> </ul>

## KEY RESULT AREA 4 - ENGAGING WITH FAMILY CARERS

Objective	Progress in 2020
We need to be firmly rooted in the experiences of all family carers in order to inform our work on their behalf.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased member offerings</li> <li>• Growth in the number of members throughout 2020</li> <li>• Reconfiguring of the Caring Employers proposition to reflect workplace needs on the back of Covid-19</li> </ul>

## KEY RESULT AREA 5 - SHINING A LIGHT ON THE REALITIES OF CARING IN IRELAND

Objective	Progress in 2020
Our capacity to influence evidence-based policy-making depends on being acknowledged as experts on the realities of caring in Ireland. Our ability to win public sympathy for our cause increases the chances of success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First ever State of Caring in Ireland report published, including a Caring in Covid-19 supplement</li> <li>• Research and Policy committee develop new Research Strategy</li> <li>• Behaviour and Attitudes survey collecting valuable data to inform our approach</li> </ul>

## KEY RESULT AREA 6 - MAKING PEOPLE AWARE OF WHAT WE OFFER

Objective	Progress in 2020
We need to increase awareness of and empathy for the organisation's brand if we are to reach our potential in terms of engaging with family carers throughout the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of family carers within the 'vulnerable' groups by Tesco Ireland for designated shopping hours</li> <li>• Airing of Unsung Heroes – following the journey of a choir of carers to their final performance in the National Opera House</li> <li>• Dramatic increase in our social media presence</li> <li>• Engagement with Irish College of General Practitioners to support GPs in understanding what we offer to family carers</li> </ul>

## KEY RESULT AREA 7 - OPTIMISE RESOURCES

Objective	Progress in 2020
We have a duty to our funders and our clients to maximise our efficiency and effectiveness; we need to grow to enable us to meet increasing numbers of family carers and we need to do it all sustainably to ensure that we will be there to meet future needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued progress in diversifying revenue base with increased levels of corporate support</li> <li>• Facilitate staff to work from home in line with Government guidelines</li> <li>• Development of our carer database to support roll out of new carer supports and activities</li> <li>• Upgrade of software across the network</li> <li>• Modelling scenarios with sensitivity analysis for 2021 budget</li> </ul>

## KEY RESULT AREA 8 - PARTNERSHIPS & ALLIANCES

Objective	Progress in 2020
Greater synergies with the health system and other voluntary organisations will maximise support for family carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in partnerships across the following themes: New Health Service partnerships; Emergency Scheme; Well-being Support; Condition Specific Supports and Education and Training.</li> </ul>

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

During 2020, Family Carers Ireland had over **174,000** direct engagements with family carers through our **21 centres**, training and respite activities. In addition, we provided almost **270,000 hours** of in-home and respite support in the community.

## Financial Overview

The financial results for the year are outlined in the Statement of Financial Activities (page 72), the Balance Sheet (page 73) and the Statement of Cash Flows (page 74) and further explained in the notes to the accounts on pages 75 to 89.

Income for the financial year was €9,877,417 which is derived from a wide range of funding streams but is predominately broken down into HSE, grant and fundraising. This funding is used to provide services and supports across the country to family carers and contracted services on behalf of the HSE with regard to supporting the cared-for person in the home.

We were successful in our bid for Dormant Accounts Fund support over a two year period of almost €645,000 for an 'Empowering Family Carers' programme of training, engagement, support and information. Targeted programmes continued during 2020 to better equip the family carer, no matter which stage they are at in their caring journey.

We received €3,555,450 from our HSE funding partners to deliver a range of supports and services across our network along with national funding for key posts and shared services across the organisation.

The impact of Covid-19 on the delivery of home support hours resulted in a reduced number of home care hours being provided by the organisation which impacted both on our available funds for charitable purposes and caused an increase in the number of carers needing our support.

We received donations amounting to €490,678 to support family carers and this allowed us to establish a hardship fund in this global pandemic. We saw an increase in the number of family carers presenting with very specific challenges, in particular, those caring for children with special needs following the closure of these schools.

Expenditure for the year was €9,862,812 and is in line with our income and the associated fulfilment requirements of contracts and grants awarded. The net surplus on resources for the year was €14,605 which predominately reflects a reduction in our homecare services around the country.

## Principal Funding Sources

Principal funding for the year arose from income from:

- **Health Service Executive**
- **Department of Health** (National Lottery Fund)
- **Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government** (Scheme to Support National Organisations)
- **Dementia 5 Steps Programme**
- **Community Foundation of Ireland**
- **Dormant Accounts Fund**
- **Various private and corporate donations**

## Income

Total income for 2020 was €9.9m which is a drop of 6% on the 2019 levels. This drop predominately relates to charitable activities, the detail of which is outlined below.

### Income from Donations and Legacies

Income from donations and legacies amounted to almost €490,679 which is an increase of 764% on 2019 levels. This increase relates in the main to corporate restricted donations with other donations received predominately from individual donors through our national network.

### Income from Charitable Activities

Income from Charitable Activities comprises Service Level Agreements under Section 39 funding from the HSE, the delivery of home support under tendered contract prices with the HSE and specific purpose grants, with key grants being from the Dormant Accounts Fund, Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO), National Lottery Funding and Community & Voluntary Pillar.

In 2020, income from charitable activities was €8.94m which is a decrease of 10% on 2019 levels and predominately relates to a drop in home support of just over €1m, decrease in grants of €100k and an increase in Section 39 of €127k. Family Carers Ireland was successful in the 2018 bid for the Home Care Package (HCP) tender competition as a Tier 1

provider in CHO 1 and 3 and a Tier 2 provider in CHO 2, 5 and 8. Prior to this tender, tiers did not exist and FCI would have provided home support services across all nine CHOs.

The provision of in-home support has become an important part of the organisation's activities, generating a modest surplus to subsidise our 'charitable' activities and also allowing us to gain a much fuller understanding of and engagement with HSE on social care services.

#### Income from Trading Activities

Income from Trading Activities can be categorised into Fundraising & Membership and Other Trading Activities. Income from Trading Activities for 2020 was €412,162 which is a decrease of 14% on 2019 levels and represents a growth in Fundraising and Membership income to €263,356 and a drop in Other Trading Activity to €148,806.

Fundraising and Membership income are important revenue streams for FCI but form a small part of our overall total income. Our strategic plan has a focus on growing both income streams over the five-year period and 2020 saw membership grow substantially, especially in the early part of the pandemic. Other Trading Income was adversely affected by Covid-19 which will continue into 2021.

#### Income from Investments

Income from investments for 2020 was €26,595 which represents an increase of 114% on 2019 levels and comprises rental income and bank interest received on short term deposits.

#### Expenditure

Total expenditure for 2020 was €9.9m which is a drop of 3% on 2019 levels. This drop predominately relates to charitable activities, the detail of which is outlined below.

#### Expenditure on Raising Funds

Expenditure on raising funds breaks down into Fundraising & Membership and Other Trading. Fundraising & Membership has increased by 32% on 2019, with 'Other Trading Expenditure' decreasing by 24% on 2019 levels but in line with activity.

#### Expenditure from Charitable Activities

Expenditure on Charitable Activities comprises the fulfilment of Service Level Agreements under HSE Section 39 funding, of home support contracts at tendered rates with the HSE and programme delivery of specific purpose grants, with key grants during the year from Dormant Accounts Fund, Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO), National Lottery Funding and Community & Voluntary Pillar.

In 2020, expenditure on charitable activities was €9.74m which is a decrease of 7% on 2019 levels and predominately in line with the reduction in income levels.

#### Reserves

The board has responsibility for developing an appropriate reserves policy for the organisation. The reserves policy was developed taking into consideration the requirement to retain sufficient unrestricted reserves to safeguard the continuity of its core activities whilst making sure that the maximum resources are going towards these activities.

The reserve policy in Family Carers Ireland is to maintain unrestricted reserves at a level which ensures the organisation's core activity could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty and it is considered prudent to hold at least six months' cover.

The Finance and Organisation Committee review the level and adequacy of the reserves on an annual basis which is brought to the board as part of the Annual Financial Statements review. Where reserves fall lower than six months, the board requires the Executive Management Team to prepare a plan to address the issue within a reasonable time frame.

The organisation receives income under two specific categories; unrestricted income which has no specific restrictions attached to how this money is spent except within its charitable objects and restricted income which can only be used for a specified purpose.

The restricted reserves are zero and the unrestricted reserves are €2.71m at year-end with these levels having been reviewed by the board through the Finance and Organisation Sub-Committee. This is reviewed against our policy to hold six months' reserves which equates to €2.57m and therefore the board considers the current level of reserves to be adequate.

The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecasting cycle, taking into consideration the risks associated with each income stream and the organisation's commitments.

#### Investments

The charity has no long-term financial investments. All reserves are on short term deposit to ensure the effective management of cash-flow and access to liquidity.



## Financial Outlook

Family Carers Ireland continues to be affected by the global Covid-19 pandemic, like many other charitable organisations - in terms of our traditional delivery of supports and services across the country and other key fundraising activities.

As an organisation, we have worked very hard to support family carers through this crisis, coming up with innovative ways in which to support from afar, ranging from online counselling to emergency planning along with a range of intensive practical supports to vulnerable family carers.

Our support to family carers will continue as we move through these uncertain times, by adapting and changing our supports to the needs of our carers. How we deploy our staff and volunteers to deliver our carer support and home support services has also been adapted in light of the Covid-19 situation with our office-based staff working from home and our home support staff being provided with additional PPE, new protocols and training necessary to safeguard against the virus.

Management have considered the impact of Covid-19 on the 2020 financial position and how it will affect resources, both incoming and outgoing, over the next two years until December 2022. In conjunction with this review, the cash flow position has been projected forward for the same two-year period with sensitivity analysis included in the considerations, along with best, worst and most likely scenarios reviewed. Whilst it is expected that Covid-19 will impact negatively on the organisation's resources in 2021, it is not likely to have such an impact that would impede the charity's ability to sustain itself in the longer term. This conclusion is drawn from following a detailed review of the level of risk and uncertainty facing the organisation, the likely outcome and our measured response to these outcomes and uncertainties.

At the time of writing, the budget for 2021 has been approved by the Board of Directors, following careful consideration of various budget scenarios with a conservative approach adopted for the year ahead. This approach has taken into consideration our current funding partners, the organisation's ability to reduce its cost base, should the need arise and risks facing the organisation. Projections for a two year period to the end of December 2022 have been reviewed using the three scenarios of worst, best and most likely outcome.

All things considered, 2021 will be a challenging year for Family Carers Ireland but given our strong financial reserve position, one which we envisage weathering.

## Future Plans

As noted earlier, staff flexibility was a key enabler of creative new synergies and efficiencies in response to the challenges presented by Covid-19. Many of the initiatives in response to these challenges have demonstrated their long-term value and relevance to family carers who are struggling or in crisis for any reason. One of the key objectives in 2021 will be to establish these initiatives on a sustainable basis through a significant organisational change process.

Some sense of the scale of increase in our levels of activity is that we now routinely have 100,000 online engagements per month – compared to less than 10,000 a year ago – at the heart of our universal supports. The scale of increased primary engagement feeds into proportionate increases in demand for secondary and tertiary support. We have adopted a public health approach to triaging our response to individual cases – distinguishing between three levels of support (universal; groups with risk factors and individual case-based).

Whilst this will allow us to target our resources effectively, it can do little to overcome problems with our current funding base. Virtually all of our public funding comes from HSE Services to Older Persons – no monies have been allocated towards the explosion in need for significant support for family carers of people with disabilities and, in particular, parents of children with special needs. Similarly, most of our funding for group and individual supports reflects historical spending patterns by local health authorities – which means that we do not have the resources to meet the 300% increase in demand for direct supports in greater Dublin and Cork urban settings. Whilst we will continue to develop corporate and public fundraising, we will not be able to sustain current levels of support long-term using only short-term revenue streams.

This points to another key priority for the coming year – ensuring that the government acts in regard to its commitment to a Carer Guarantee. At a meeting with the Minister for Health on 23rd November, 2020 we were told that the Department had “secured €2 million in the budget for advancing the National Carers' Strategy, with a focus on providing a more standard package of supports to family carers in every region” and that the service delivery arrangements would be decided by the HSE in the 2021 National Service Plan. The lack of urgency shown by this arrangement is disappointing but we will work hard to ensure that the process delivers the best possible outcome in terms of responding to demonstrated need across Ireland's 500,000 family carers.

We will publish our first annual assessment of progress implementing those elements of the Programme for Government that have the potential to improve the lives of family carers during the summer of 2021. We will also continue to engage on other long-term priorities such as the promised statutory basis for home care and the planned commencement of key parts of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, 2015. Alongside these ongoing strategic priorities, we will continue to be vocal on issues relating to the continuing pandemic as they arise – we are currently being particularly vocal on the issues of practical support for family carers in their caring role, priority access to vaccines for carers who need it and provision of parental options in regard to the education of children with special needs.



# STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

## Constitution

The charity is registered as a company limited by guarantee (CLG), not having a share capital (CRO No. 572819). The charity has been granted charitable status under Section 207 and 208 of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997 (CHY 10962). The principal objective is to benefit the community by supporting and promoting the health, wellbeing and quality of life of family carers and those for whom they care; to facilitate the affiliation of groups and group members representing family carers throughout Ireland and to liaise with, support and take counsel from such groups.

## Board

Family Carers Ireland is governed by a voluntary board of directors. Each director is appointed for a three-year term and may serve a second three-year term if recommended by the Nominations and Succession Planning Committee. This committee advises the board on its composition to ensure the board has an appropriate mix of skills and experience in the discharge of its duties and responsibilities in line with the requirements as set out in the constitution. An outline of board biographies can be viewed in the Annual Report.

## Method of Appointment or Election of Directors

The nominations and remuneration planning committee will review any board nominations made by directors, groups or sub-committee members in the context of the skills mix required for the smooth operation of the organisation.

The governance of the charity is the responsibility of the directors who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the constitution which outlines that the board shall comprise a maximum of 14 (and a minimum of 3) directors made up as follows:

- 6 shall be from a carer background (the board shall regulate the nomination process to ensure geographical balance on the carer panel);
- 6 shall be nominated by a committee of the outgoing board to ensure a mix of management and governance experience on the new board; and
- Up to 2 additional directors co-opted by the board.

The organisation seeks to ensure that a majority of board members have personal experience of being a family carer on a full-time or part-time basis.

Directors are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the organisation. Additional directors may be appointed by ordinary resolution and hold office until the next AGM.

## Governance

The board of Family Carers Ireland is committed to achieving high standards of governance and during 2019 undertook a key project of adopting the Charity Regulatory Authority (CRA) Charities Governance Code with regard to strengthening its overall governance infrastructure. This process involved reviewing our current governance framework, documenting how the organisation demonstrates conformance with the code and completing the compliance record form along with collating all of the relevant supporting data to facilitate a review annually. The board formally adopted the CRA Charities Governance Code initially in May 2019 and reviewed in December 2020 its updated Compliance Record Form to ensure continued compliance.

The organisation has achieved the 'Charities Institute Ireland' triple lock of best practice by signing up to the new Governance Code, adopting best practice reporting by adopting the Charity SORP (FRS 102) - Statement of Recommended Practice and adhering to the CRA Guidelines on Fundraising along with adhering to the CRA Internal Financial Control Guidelines for Charities.

The board delegates the day-to-day management of the organisation to the CEO who is supported by an Executive Management Team comprising four department leads in Operations; Communications and Carer Engagement; Corporate Services; and Innovation and Strategic Partnerships.

The board and sub-committee meets on a regular basis and the following outlines the board and sub-committee meetings during 2020. The first figure outlines the number of meetings the member was eligible to attend, whilst the second figure outlines the number of actual meetings attended. Each board member is also a member of at least one board sub-committee and attendance is also outlined below:



Board Members	Board	Finance and Organisation	Audit & Risk	Quality and Safety	Carer Support & Engagement	Marketing & Fundraising	Research & Policy
Shane McCarthy (Chair)	6/6	6/6	2/2				
Triona Fortune (Vice-Chair)	5/6		1/2	2/2			
Robert Anderson (Chair RPC)	2/3						1/1
Veronica Baylon	6/6				1/3		1/1
Cora Long	3/3						
Antoinette Greene	5/6			1/2	1/3	1/1	
Tom Jordan	3/3	1/2					
Graham Knowles	3/3	2/2		1/1			
Barbara Kovach	4/6				2/3	0/1	
Rosemary Kratschmar	5/6			2/2		0/1	
Padraic Neenan	2/3			1/1			
Peter O'Connell (Chair of MFC)	5/6		1/2			1/1	
Michael O'Neill (Chair of FAO)	6/6	6/6					
Johanne Powell (Chair of CSE)	6/6				2/3		1/1
Eilish Smith	3/6				2/3	1/1	
Jim Waters	2/2	2/2					
<b>Other External Committee Members</b>							
Grace Dempsey (Chairperson of ARC)			2/2				
John Lonergan			1/2				
Luke Mooney			2/2				
Jimmy Duggan		0/1			1/3		
Mary Murphy					0/3		
Susan Hogan							
Mischa McLnerney						1/1	
Ann Gardiner				0/2			
John Hillery				0/2			
Frank Goodwin							1/1
Deirdre O'Donnell							1/1
John Healy							1/1

**Note the following acronyms are used in the above table:**

FAO – Finance and Organisation; ARC – Audit and Risk; QSC – Quality and Safety; CSE – Carer Support and Engagement; MFC – Marketing and Fundraising; RPC – Research and Policy.

Directors do not receive remuneration or other benefits from their work with the charity. All expenses wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred on behalf of a director in the performance of their role are reimbursed in line with Family Carers Ireland policy on board expenses and amounted to €2,282 for 2020 (2019: €11,618).

## Training & Policies Adopted by the Board

As part of the board development programme, all directors are invited to participate in an annual training workshop which is usually facilitated by an external provider. Due to Covid-19, it was agreed that this training would be deferred until such a time that it can take place in a face-to-face capacity.

The board also reviews its performance on an annual basis which is reviewed by the entire board with initiatives arising from this brought forward by the chairperson.

## Organisational Structure & Decision Making

Operational decisions in the running of the charity are the responsibility of the CEO and four senior managers: Head of Operations, Head of Communications and Carer Engagement; Head of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships and Head of Corporate Services. The Head of Corporate Services also acts as the Company Secretary. The CEO and Company Secretary attend meetings of the board and the CEO reports to the Family Carers Ireland board through the chairperson.

To support the board in the breadth and effectiveness of its function, Family Carers Ireland has established six sub-committees with clear terms of reference to support the board work programme as follows: Finance and Organisation; Audit and Risk; Quality and Safety; Carer Support and Engagement; Research and Policy; and Marketing and Fundraising. The board also has a Nominations and Remuneration committee which meets as required. The chairperson or a nominated director of each committee reports back to the board at each board meeting.

## Finance & Organisation Committee

The Finance and Organisation Committee has a focus on strategic planning, budgeting and financial control, human resourcing, information technology and overall facilities management within the organisation. The committee oversees the efficient financial management of the organisation including the collection, investment, borrowing and outlay of all monies required and members span the areas of expertise required to perform the functions as outlined above.

During 2020, the committee focused on reviewing the organisation's resources with regards to the effect of Covid-19; the impact on office-based staff and homecare

staff; and the strengthening of the IT infrastructure to enable the supports and services continue remotely or online.

## Audit & Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee consists of experts in the areas of audit, corporate governance and financial management. This committee assists the board in fulfilling its responsibilities by independently reviewing financial statements and the effectiveness of the internal controls. The committee also monitors the effectiveness of the external audit function and is currently chaired by a senior professional, Grace Dempsey, who is not a member of the board.

The work programme of the Audit and Risk Committee included ascertaining the impact on the organisation resources as a result of the pandemic and its standing agenda item of co-ordinating risk management on behalf of the board which also included specific Covid-19 risks.

## Quality & Safety Committee

The Quality and Safety Committee oversees the supports and services provided by Family Carers Ireland and seeks to ensure that the organisation is following best practice in all aspects of its clinical and social care. All committee members have the relevant expertise and experience to allow them advise on the development of quality and safety standards within the organisation.

The key focus of the committee during 2020 was overseeing the introduction of policies and procedures relating to Covid-19 along with reviewing feedback on the client satisfaction survey with the aim of building upon this feedback in future years.

## Carer Support and Engagement Committee

Given the establishment of a Marketing and Fundraising Committee which now oversees Member Services, the name of the committee changed to Carer Support and Engagement and will now focus on the organisation's suite of supports to carers and how we engage with these carers effectively.

The Carer Support and Engagement Committee work plan for 2020 saw it react to the impact of Covid-19 by tailoring supports and services to reach carers as possible.

## Research & Policy Committee

The Research and Policy Committee oversees the organisation's research activity and policy positions; helps support the evaluation of policy campaigns; and advise on approaches in specific areas. Being the first year in operation the committee focused on setting its objectives and workplan for the forthcoming year.



## Marketing & Fundraising Committee

The Marketing and Fundraising Committee oversees the implementation of the organisation's marketing strategy which has been developed in line with the strategic five-year plan. Activity will be monitored, measured and reported upon to the board along with the streamlining of fundraising. Being the first year in operation this committee also focused on setting its objectives and workplan for the forthcoming year.

### Related Parties

A related party register is maintained by the organisation and reviewed by the Finance and Organisation Committee at each meeting with disclosure to the full board at the next board meeting. During the course of 2020, there were no payments made to directors outside of the normal travel and subsistence policy.

### Pay Policy for Senior Staff

The organisation values its staff and strives to attract a high calibre of staff given its wide remit to deliver supports and services to carers. Pay rates are benchmarked against the sector using published survey data – our policy is to align broadly with the middle pay band for our size and sector. We introduced a three year pay framework in 2019 and were delighted to be able to honour increases in 2020, notwithstanding the disruption Covid-19 caused to our normal budgetary model. The key management personnel comprise the CEO and Executive Management Team (EMT). The Chief Executive's total remuneration is disclosed in note 13 to the accounts. It is reviewed by the board annually. The pay bands of other senior staff are also set out in note 13. These are approved by the FAO on the advice of the Chief Executive.

As required under our funding agreements, Family Carers Ireland has regard to the public sector pay guidelines. We were invited in November 2020 to participate in a pay restoration process relating to financial cuts during the 2009-2013 time period in November 2020. However, the process related solely to restoring the pay of employees whose roles have remained unchanged since 2009. Family Carers Ireland undertook significant reorganisation in order to protect and ultimately increase front line services within a reduced budget which meant we were unable to participate in the process as it had been designed and so have no avenue to pursue restoration of the €475k funding cuts experienced during 2009-2013 we lost at that time. We note and regret the precedent this sets in regard to penalising proactive management in response to future crises.

### Risk Management

The directors maintain and regularly review a comprehensive risk register which assesses the major risks to which the organisation is exposed, identifies controls to mitigate these risks and contains an action plan to further reduce the level

of risks. These risks are categorised under the headings of Governance along with the six board committees. The risk register process involves staff teams initially identifying risks facing the organisation under the seven areas and this being reviewed quarterly by the EMT with the top relevant risks reviewed by each board committee at each of its meetings, in full annually by each board committee and subsequently by the full board.

### Principal Risks and Uncertainties

In common with all organisations offering personalised responses to individual circumstances, our main operational risks centre on consistency and fidelity in the delivery of services and supports. This is exacerbated by the increasing and not always consistent regulatory regimes we operate in as a charitable company providing health and social care services. These compliance risks are managed through the use of formal policies and procedures, ongoing training, effective management and supervision, client feedback and regular audit and review.

Failure to attract and retain the right staff and volunteers is a fundamental risk for every human services organisation. We strive to make Family Carers Ireland a place where staff and volunteers feel supported, empowered and valued.

Government policy of refusing to acknowledge pay cost pressures in its funding for voluntary organisations means that our capacity to compete with public sector salaries represents an escalating external risk that is largely outside our control.

Loss of funding or cash flow represents another ever-present risk to our capacity to fulfil our mission. A key element in the management of this financial risk involves regularly reviewing available funds, managing the funding mix of the organisation and margins on each element of our activity. The organisation also operates conservative accounting policies and a prudent reserves policy.

As an organisation that seeks to be the authentic voice of family carers, we acknowledge the risk that our policy and advocacy positions do not reflect a comprehensive and accurate picture of the reality of life for all family carers in every part of the country. We manage this risk by organising a variety of regular 'listening' activities and forums and by welcoming and engaging with feedback on our published policy positions.

We have a significant, active online community which we value greatly but it brings with it an ever-present risk of reputational risk in terms of inaccurate or defamatory information being published on our forums. We manage this risk by rules, monitoring and restricted permissions.

An event such as the Covid-19 pandemic illustrates the risk of failing to achieve an appropriate balance between responding to changing circumstances with the duty to adhere to our charitable objects. We manage the risk of mission creep by robust governance systems, distributed leadership and

collegial teamwork at all levels of the organisation.

Following the year end, and probably continuing into 2021, we see significant additional Covid-19 related risks. These include the challenge of implementing enhanced public health guidelines (e.g. infection control) in the context of social distancing and its impact on training and supervising capacity. There are also new risks in regard to timely access to appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and timely testing. New risks facing the organisation during this time are being actively managed as well as being captured and added to our risk register for ongoing review and monitoring.

Finally, in line with good practice, we recognise the ever-present risk of events which, however unlikely, have the potential to constitute an existential threat to the organisation. We seek to manage these risks by designing

robust redundancy capabilities in all essential systems and regularly reviewing our disaster response protocol.

#### Funds held as Custodian

There are no funds held in this category.

#### Taxation Exemption

The charity has been granted charitable status under Sections 207 and 208 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

#### Political Donations

There were no political contributions which require disclosure under the Electoral Act 1997.



# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## DIRECTORS' REPORT

### Accounting Records

The measures taken by the directors to ensure compliance with the requirements of Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014, with regard to the keeping of accounting records, are the employment of appropriately qualified accounting personnel and the maintenance of computerised accounting systems. The company's accounting records are maintained at the company's registered office.

### Statement on Relevant Audit Information

In the case of each of the persons who are directors at the time, this report is approved in accordance with Section 332 of the Companies Act 2014, so far as each director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's statutory auditors are unaware, and each director has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

### Auditors

The auditors, Mazars, chartered accountants and auditors, registered auditors, continue in office in accordance with section 383(2) of the Companies Act, 2014.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Directors:



Shane McCarthy  
Director:

Date: 28th April 2021



Triona Fortune  
Director:

Date: 28th April 2021

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

for the year ended 31 December 2020

The directors are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law, the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council and The Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), issued by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at the financial year end date and of the net income or expenditure of the company for the financial period and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the company keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the company, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and net income or expenditure of the company to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Directors:



Shane McCarthy  
Director:

Date: 28th April 2021



Triona Fortune  
Director:

Date: 28th April 2021

# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

## TO THE MEMBERS OF FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

### Report on the audit of the financial statements

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Family Carers Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2020, which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes, including the summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 2. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish Law and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland issued in the United Kingdom by the Financial Reporting Council (FRS 102).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Company as at 31 December 2020 and of its result for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

#### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report.

We are independent of the Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard for Auditors (Ireland) issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified

any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

#### Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- in our opinion, the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements;
- in our opinion, the directors' report has been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014;
- the accounting records of the Company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited; and
- the financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

## TO THE MEMBERS OF FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified any material misstatements in the directors' report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions required by Sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Respective responsibilities

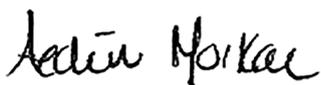
#### Responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement set out on page 69, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error,



Aedín Morkan  
for and on behalf of Mazars  
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm  
Harcourt Centre  
Block 3  
Harcourt Road  
Dublin 2

and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: [http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description\\_of\\_auditors\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_audit.pdf](http://www.iaasa.ie/getmedia/b2389013-1cf6-458b-9b8f-a98202dc9c3a/Description_of_auditors_responsibilities_for_audit.pdf). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

#### The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the Company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2021

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

for the year ended 31 December 2020

(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)

		Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Unrestricted Funds 2019	Restricted Funds 2019	Total Funds 2019
	Notes	€	€	€	€	€	€
<b>Income from:</b>							
Donations and legacies	4	68,403	422,275	490,678	46,465	10,322	56,787
Charitable activities	7	4,572,217	4,375,765	8,947,982	5,627,241	4,321,240	9,948,481
Trading activities	8	412,162	-	412,162	450,694	30,464	481,158
Investment income	9	26,595	-	26,595	12,400	-	12,400
<b>Total income</b>		<b>5,079,377</b>	<b>4,798,040</b>	<b>9,877,417</b>	<b>6,136,800</b>	<b>4,362,026</b>	<b>10,498,826</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Raising funds	10	114,231	-	114,231	168,080	960	169,000
Charitable activities	11	4,636,399	5,112,182	9,748,581	5,537,680	4,490,902	10,028,582
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>4,750,630</b>	<b>5,112,182</b>	<b>9,862,812</b>	<b>5,705,760</b>	<b>4,491,862</b>	<b>10,197,622</b>
Net income before transfers		328,747	(314,142)	14,605	431,040	(129,836)	301,204
Transfers between funds		(314,142)	314,142	-	(129,836)	129,836	-
<b>Net movement in funds for the year</b>		<b>14,605</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,605</b>	<b>301,204</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>301,204</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>							
Total funds brought forward	22	2,701,671	-	2,701,671	2,400,467	-	2,400,467
Total funds carried forward	22	2,716,276	-	2,716,276	2,701,671	-	2,701,671

There were no other recognised gains or losses in the current or prior year other than those included in the Statement of Financial Activities. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## BALANCE SHEET

as at 31 December 2020

		2020	2019
	Notes	€	€
<b>Fixed Assets:</b>			
Tangible assets	17	287,518	292,334
<b>Current Assets:</b>			
Debtors	18	1,357,312	1,504,664
Cash and cash equivalents	25	2,485,036	2,042,904
		<b>3,842,348</b>	<b>3,547,568</b>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	19	(1,413,590)	(1,138,231)
Net Current Assets		2,428,758	2,409,337
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		<b>2,716,276</b>	<b>2,701,671</b>
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>			
Unrestricted		2,716,276	2,701,671
Restricted		-	-
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>2,716,276</b>	<b>2,701,671</b>

The notes on pages 75 to 89 form part of the financial statements.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 28th April 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



Shane McCarthy  
Director:

Date: 28th April 2021



Triona Fortune  
Director:

Date: 28th April 2021

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS

for the year ended 31 December 2020

		2020	2019
	Notes	€	€
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash provided by operating activities	24	449,261	73,067
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Bank Deposit Interest		-	500
Payments to acquire tangible assets	17	(7,129)	(278,243)
Proceeds from sale of investments		-	-
Net cash used in investment activities		(7,129)	(277,743)
Net (decrease) / increase in cash and cash equivalents		442,132	(204,676)
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January</b>		2,042,904	2,247,581
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December</b>	25	2,485,036	2,042,904



# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 1) General Information

These financial statements comprising the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes 1 to 30 constitute the individual financial statements of Family Carers Ireland for the financial year ended 31 December 2020.

Family Carers Ireland is a Company Limited by Guarantee (registered under Part 18 of the Companies Act 2014) incorporated in the Republic of Ireland. It is a charity registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority and a public benefit entity. The registered office is Unit 1, Hibernia Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8. The principle place of business for the charity is Market Square, Tullamore, Co Offaly.

#### Statement of Compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (FRS 102). The financial statements have also been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (FRS 102) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities".

#### Currency

The financial statements have been presented in Euro (€) which is also the functional currency of the charity.

### 2) Accounting Policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the company's financial statements.

#### Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis and in accordance with the historical cost convention modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is the Companies Act 2014, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council and the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP (FRS102)) as published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator which

is recognised by the UK Financial Reporting Council (FRC) as the appropriate body to issue SORPs for the charity sector in the UK. Financial reporting in line with SORP is considered best practice for charities in Ireland. The Directors consider that the adoption of the SORP requirements is the most appropriate accounting to properly reflect and disclose the activities of the organisation.

#### Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, performance conditions attached to the income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Where income has not yet been received but all criteria for recognition have been satisfied, the income is accrued as a debtor on the Balance Sheet. Where income pertaining to grants with specific performance related conditions has been received in advance, it is deferred as a creditor on the Balance Sheet until the relevant conditions have been met. Income arising from tax rebates is only recognised on confirmation from Revenue of the amount and when there is certainty of receipt.

Donation and Fundraising income is recognised when the donations are received. Income from legacies is recognised when it becomes probable that the funds will be received. This is where there is a grant of probate, the executors have established that there is sufficient assets in the estate and any conditions attached are within the control of the charity. Donated goods for resale are recognised within Fundraising Income when the items are sold. In accordance with SORP, general volunteer time is not recognised.

Grants from Government agencies and other sources are recognised as income when the charity is legally entitled to the income and has fulfilled the conditions of the grant agreement. Such funds are classed as restricted funds. The individual grant agreements establish the purpose for which the charity can lawfully use the restricted funds.

Unrestricted income is income that is spent at the discretion of the Directors to further any of the charity's purposes. Unrestricted income can also be used to supplement expenditure made from restricted funds.

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

Income from other trading activities comprises mainly fundraising and membership income and is recognised once the funds have been received.

Bank deposit income is recognised when the interest has been applied to the account.

### Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a legal or constructive obligation exists as a result of a past event, a transfer of economic benefit is required in settlement and the amount of obligation can be measured reliably.

Cost of raising funds comprise of the costs incurred in Fundraising and Membership and the direct costs of providing private respite care.

Charitable expenditure consist of those costs incurred in undertaking the work to meet its charitable objectives. It includes costs that can be attributed directly to these activities and also costs that are of an indirect nature but necessary to support them.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared activity costs. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of the resources. Support costs relate to salary and governance expenditure which are allocated based on the mechanism by which they are funded.

Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements and statutory requirements of the charity. These include costs related to the strategic planning, board training, AGM costs, audit costs and costs incurred due to legal and statutory requirements.

### Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Tangible Fixed Assets are recorded when a resource is controlled by the charity, it is probable that the expected future economic benefits associated with the asset will flow and the cost can be reliably measured. Tangible Fixed Assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation.

Only items exceeding €1,000 are capitalised. Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis on assets with a value exceeding €1,000 over its expected useful life as follows:

<b>Buildings</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Computer Equipment</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Office Equipment</b>	<b>20%</b>

### Impairments of assets

If an asset is impaired the impairment loss is the difference between the carrying amount and the present value of the estimated cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. The impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activity.

If there is a decrease in the impairment loss arising from an event occurring after the impairment was recognised the impairment is reversed. The reversal is such that the current carrying amount does not exceed what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised. The impairment reversal is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activity.

### Financial Instruments

The charity only enters into basic financial instrument transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities. Financial assets comprise trade debtors, other debtors and cash at bank. Financial liabilities comprise trade creditors, PAYE/PRSI/VAT and other creditors. Basic financial instruments are accounted for in accordance with Section 11 of FRS 102.

### Other Financial Assets

Other financial assets including trade and other debtors are measured initially at transaction price. Subsequently, they are measured at amortised costs less any provision for impairment. The aim is to ensure that there is adequate provision for bad and doubtful debts and as such the policy is to allow for a bad debt provision for all debt over six months old. All movements in the level of provision required are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

### Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash consists of cash on hand and demand deposits. Cash equivalents consist of short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash that are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### Other Financial Liabilities

Trade creditors are measured at transaction price, unless payment is deferred beyond normal business terms or is financed at a rate of interest that is not a market rate. In this case the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, and the financial liability is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

### Provisions and Liabilities for Charges

Provisions are recognised when the charity has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of past events, it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation, and the amount of the obligation can be estimated reliably.

### Employee Benefits

The charity provides a range of benefits to employees, including paid holiday arrangements and defined contribution pension plans.

### Defined Contribution Pension Plan

The charity operates a defined contribution plan. A defined contribution is a pension plan under which the charity pays fixed contributions into a separate fund. Under defined contribution plans, the charity has no legal or constructive obligations to pay further contributions if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods. For defined contribution plans, the charity pays contributions to privately administered pension plans on a contractual or voluntary basis for eligible employees at management level. The charity has no further payment obligations once the contributions have been paid. The contributions are recognised as employee benefit expense when they are due. Prepaid contributions are recognised as an asset to the extent that a cash refund or a reduction in the future payments is available.

### Short term Employee Benefits

Short term benefits, including holiday pay and other similar non-monetary benefits, are recognised as an expense in the period in which the service is received.

### Termination Costs

Once-off termination payments that are not required by contract, legislation or other obligations or commitments, are recognised in the financial year in which they become payable.

### Taxation

No charge to Corporation Tax arises as the charity has been granted an exemption under Section 207 and 208 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997. The charity is registered for VAT with regard to the relevant commercial activity. All other income and expenditure are recorded inclusive of VAT incurred.

### Funds

Unrestricted funds are funds spent or applied at the discretion of the Directors to further any of the charity's purposes. Unrestricted funds can be used to supplement expenditure made from restricted funds. They comprise incoming and outgoing resources and expenditures for the charity's purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds which are set aside for a particular purpose by the Directors.

Funds held on specific trusts under the charity law are classed as restricted funds. The specific trusts may be declared by the donor when making the gift or may result from the terms of an appeal for funds. The specific trusts establish the purpose for which a charity can lawfully use the restricted funds.

### Operating Lease

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

## 3) Significant accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of these financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses.

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

Judgements and estimates are continually evaluated and are based on historical experiences and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future.

The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

### Going Concern

The directors have prepared budgets and cash flows to the end of 2022 from the date of approval of the financial statements which demonstrate that there is no material uncertainty regarding the company's ability to meet its liabilities as they fall due, and to continue as a going concern. In making this assessment, the directors have made a key assumption that funding through our HSE Service Level Agreements will not materially change going forward. The directors have considered the impact of Covid-19 and do not consider that the impact will be so significant as to cast doubt on the ability of the organisation to continue in operational existence. On this basis the directors consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. Accordingly, these financial statements do not include any adjustments to the carrying amounts and classification of assets and liabilities that may arise if the company was unable to continue as a going concern.

### 4) Donations and Legacies

	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
Donations	68,403	422,275	490,678	56,787

### 5) Voluntary Income

The charity receives Section 39 funding through a Service Level Agreement on an annual basis from the Health Service Executive (HSE) in the geographical areas outlined in note 6.

In accordance with the disclosure requirements set out in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13/2014 Management of the Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds, the charity receives S39 funding from the HSE through local Community Health Organisations (CHOs) to provide through our national bases respite/support services to family carers.

These HSE SLAs have specific service arrangements and funds are expended in accordance with the terms of each specific grant and invoiced to the HSE on a monthly basis.

Due to the demand for services, the charity in many areas raises additional funds to provide further support and services to family carers.



# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 6) Section 39 Income & Expenditure

	2020 Income	2020 Expenditure	2019 Income	2019 Expenditure
	€	€	€	€
Core Grant	1,420,780	1,420,780	1,420,780	1,420,780
East Coast - Wicklow	80,327	80,327	92,995	92,995
Northern – North Dublin	114,517	114,517	119,672	119,672
South Western – Kildare	16,739	16,739	16,739	16,739
South Western – Dublin West	46,175	46,175	54,700	54,700
Midlands – Laois/Offaly	107,650	107,650	72,650	72,650
Midlands – Longford/Westmeath	119,255	119,255	79,300	79,300
Mid-Western – Limerick/Clare	696,797	696,797	719,982	719,982
North Western – Sligo	207,809	207,809	115,737	115,737
Western – Roscommon	144,175	144,175	152,289	152,289
Western – Mayo	25,000	25,000	20,000	20,000
Western – Galway	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Southern – Cork/Kerry	102,928	102,928	112,198	112,198
South Eastern - Kilkenny	132,669	132,669	132,669	132,669
South Eastern – Clonmel	104,667	104,667	95,740	95,740
South Eastern – Wexford	104,238	104,238	77,724	77,724
South Eastern -Waterford	77,724	77,724	90,825	90,825
North Eastern – Cavan/Monaghan	29,000	29,000	29,000	29,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,555,450</b>	<b>3,555,450</b>	<b>3,428,000</b>	<b>3,428,000</b>

### 7) Charitable Activity Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
Charitable Activity Income (See Note A)	4,572,217	4,375,765	8,947,982	9,948,481

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 7) Charitable Activity Income (CONTD)

	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
<b>Note A - Restricted</b>				
Section 39 Grant Income (note 6)	35,000	3,520,450	3,555,450	3,428,000
Group	-	23,519	23,519	49,368
Dementia Project	-	252,325	252,325	277,333
Other Grant Income	-	106,059	106,059	309,308
Dormant Account Income	-	362,836	362,836	245,772
SSNO Income	-	80,432	80,432	44,036
Comhairle Income	-	30,144	30,144	30,144
Home Support Services	4,537,217	-	4,537,217	5,564,530
Other Grant Income	-	-	-	62,711
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,572,217</b>	<b>4,375,765</b>	<b>8,947,982</b>	<b>9,948,481</b>

Note – Other grant income consists of small grants given to the organisation for specified projects, none of which are over €40k.

### 8) Trading Activities

	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
Charity Trading Income	412,162	-	412,162	481,158

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 8) Trading Activities (CONTD)

	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
<b>Trading Activities Breakdown</b>				
Fundraising & Membership Income	263,356	-	263,356	239,740
Other Trading Income	148,806	-	148,806	241,418
<b>Total</b>	<b>412,162</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>412,162</b>	<b>481,158</b>

### 9) Investment Income

	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
Rental Income	26,595	-	26,595	11,900
Bank Deposit Interest	-	-	-	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,595</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26,595</b>	<b>12,400</b>

### 10) Cost of Raising Funds

	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
Fundraising & Membership Costs	31,349	-	31,349	59,879
Other Costs of Raising Funds	82,882	-	82,882	109,161
<b>Total</b>	<b>114,231</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>114,231</b>	<b>169,040</b>

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 11) Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
<b>Summary of Charitable Activities</b>				
Donation Expenditure	682	383,419	384,101	-
Other Grant Expenditure (Note A)	-	660,849	660,849	689,758
Wages and Salaries (Note B)	4,227,861	3,039,594	7,267,455	7,723,983
Overhead Expenditure (Note C)	407,856	1,028,320	1,436,176	1,614,841

Note A - Other Grant Expenditure	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
Dementia Programme	-	225,043	225,043	239,469
Dormant Accounts Programme	-	362,837	362,837	245,772
Other Grant Expenditure	-	72,969	72,969	204,517
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>660,849</b>	<b>660,849</b>	<b>689,758</b>

Note B – Wages and Salaries	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
Direct Wages	3,242,664	900,589	4,143,253	4,761,719
Indirect Wages	985,197	2,139,005	3,124,202	2,962,264
<b>Total Wages</b>	<b>4,227,861</b>	<b>3,039,594</b>	<b>7,267,455</b>	<b>7,723,983</b>

The above wage costs exclude the cost of wages funded by way of grant income which is included in the cost of other grant expenditure. This cost also excludes the cost of respite wages which is included in the cost of raising funds.

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 11) Charitable Activities (Contd)

Note C - Project	Unrestricted Funds 2020	Restricted Funds 2020	Total Funds 2020	Total Funds 2019
	€	€	€	€
Establishment	59,509	332,799	392,308	425,172
IT and Administration	176,008	189,456	365,464	372,350
Training and Local Centre	145,952	195,714	341,666	277,356
Other Overheads	314	101,165	101,479	284,713
Group Expenditure	-	23,769	23,769	49,385
Programme Costs	26,073	185,417	211,490	205,865
<b>Total</b>	<b>407,856</b>	<b>1,028,320</b>	<b>1,436,176</b>	<b>1,614,841</b>

Other Overheads in 2020 include a write back of €73k in relation to a reduction in the bad debt provision

### 12) Employees and Remuneration

The average number of persons employed during the year was as follows:

	2020 Number	2019 Number
Corporate Services	11	12
Communications	15	13
Operations	79	86
Home Care Workers	529	656
	<b>634</b>	<b>767</b>

The staff costs comprise:

	2020	2019
	€	€
Wages and salaries	7,017,973	7,552,721
Social security costs	1,731,966	1,789,218
Pension costs	21,865	13,456
	<b>8,771,804</b>	<b>9,355,458</b>

The above staff costs represent the total cost of wages and salaries returned to the Revenue and has been allocated across the cost of charitable activities, cost of raising funds and direct and indirect wages in line with SORP.

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 13) Remuneration and benefits received by key management personnel

The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension costs) received by the charity's key management personnel was €478,513 (2019: €370,142). A 2% pay increase was awarded to all staff in 2020 in keeping with a three year pay strategy agreed by the Board in 2019. A new position, Head of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships, also joined the Executive Management Team in 2020 and was funded by the Scheme to Support National Organisations. The total number of employees whose benefits for the reporting period fell within the bands below were as follows (these include the senior management team and the CEO):

	2020 Number	2019 Number
€70,000 to €80,000	2	3
€80,000 to €90,000	2	-
€90,000 to €100,000	-	1
€100,000 to €120,000	1	
	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

The salary of the Chief Executive Officer in 2020 was €107,243 (2019: €102,011), including pension but excluding Employers PRSI.

### 14) Directors' Expenses

Expenses are paid to board directors in line with the charity's expenses policy. During 2020, €2,282 (2019: €11,618) was paid to five directors for travel and subsistence incurred in the performance of their duties as directors.

### 15) Net Income

This is stated after charging:

	2020	2019
	€	€
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	11,945	6,759
Auditor's Remuneration	22,385	22,755

During 2020 and 2019, no director received any remuneration or benefit in kind

### 16) Auditor's Remuneration

The Auditor's remuneration amounts to an audit fee inclusive of VAT of €22,385 (2019 - €22,755) in respect of statutory audit services.

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 17) Tangible Fixed Assets

	Computer Equipment	Property, Plant & Equipment	Total
	€	€	€
At 1 January 2020	40,961	267,500	308,461
Additions	7,129	-	7,129
Disposals	-	-	-
<b>At 31 December 2020</b>	<b>48,090</b>	<b>267,500</b>	<b>315,590</b>
At 1 January 2020	14,344	1,783	16,127
Charge for the year	6,631	5,314	11,944
On disposals	-	-	-
<b>At 31 December 2020</b>	<b>27,115</b>	<b>7,097</b>	<b>28,072</b>
At 31 December 2020	27,115	260,403	287,518
<b>At 31 December 2019</b>	<b>26,617</b>	<b>265,717</b>	<b>292,334</b>

### 18) Debtors

	2020	2019
	€	€
Trade Debtors	968,134	1,321,239
Other Debtors	241,681	94,135
Prepayments and accrued income	147,497	89,290
	<b>1,357,312</b>	<b>1,504,664</b>

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 19) Creditors

Amounts falling due within one year:

	2020	2019
	€	€
Trade Creditors	184,746	116,131
Other taxation and social security costs (Note 20)	152,816	138,404
Accruals	407,198	375,405
Deferred Income (Note 21)	668,834	508,291
	<b>1,431,590</b>	<b>1,138,231</b>

Trade and other creditors are payable at various dates in the next 12 months in accordance with the suppliers standard terms.

### 20) Taxation and Social Security

	2020	2019
	€	€
PAYE/PRSI	151,202	137,483
VAT	1,614	921
	<b>152,816</b>	<b>138,404</b>

### 21) Deferred Income

	2020	2019
	€	€
At beginning of year	508,291	365,996
Income deferred during the year	415,823	363,397
Credited to Statement of Financial Activities	(255,254)	(221,102)
<b>At end of year</b>	<b>668,830</b>	<b>508,291</b>

Deferred income relates to income received from Pobal, National Lottery, Carer Group funds and various other grants that had specific performance related conditions and where the funds have been received in advance. These funds are deferred as a creditor on the balance sheet until the relevant conditions have been met.

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 22) Analysis of Movement of Funds

Prior Year	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total
	€	€	€	€
Opening Balance at 1 January 2019	2,100,467	300,000	-	2,400,467
Income	6,136,800	-	4,362,026	10,498,826
Expenditure	(5,705,760)	-	(4,491,862)	(10,197,622)
Transfer Between Funds	170,164	(300,000)	129,836	-
<b>Closing Balance at 31 December 2019</b>	<b>2,701,671</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,701,671</b>

Current Year	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total
	€	€	€	€
Opening Balance at 1 January 2020	2,701,671	-	-	2,701,671
Income	5,079,377	-	4,798,040	9,877,417
Expenditure	(4,750,630)	-	(5,112,182)	(9,862,812)
Transfer Between Funds	(314,142)	-	314,142	-
<b>Closing Balance at 31 December 2020</b>	<b>2,716,276</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,716,276</b>

### 23) Analysis of Net Assets By Fund

Prior Year	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total
	€	€	€	€
<b>Represented by:</b>				
Fixed Assets	292,334	-	-	292,334
Current Assets	3,547,568	-	-	3,547,568
Current Liabilities	(1,138,231)	-	-	(1,138,231)
	<b>2,701,671</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,701,671</b>

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 23) Analysis of Net Assets By Fund (Contd)

Current Year	Unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total
	€	€	€	€
<b>Represented by:</b>				
Fixed Assets	287,518	-	-	287,518
Current Assets	3,842,348	-	-	3,842,348
Current Liabilities	(1,413,590)	-	-	(1,413,590)
	<b>2,716,276</b>	-	-	<b>2,716,276</b>

### 24) Reconciliation of Net Movement in Funds to Net Cash Flow From Operating Activities

	2020	2019
	€	€
Net Income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	14,605	301,204
<b>Adjustment for:</b>		
Depreciation charges	11,945	6,769
Investment Income	-	(500)
Decrease in Debtors	147,352	311,716
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	275,359	(546,119)
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>449,261</b>	<b>73,067</b>

### 25) Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2020	2019
	€	€
Cash and bank balances	2,485,036	2,042,904

# FAMILY CARERS IRELAND

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

for the year ended 31 December 2020

### 26) Pension Commitments

The charity operates a defined contributions pension scheme for eligible employees at executive management level. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by the charity to the fund and amounted to €21,865 (2019: €13,456). No contributions were payable at year end.

### 27) Operating Lease Commitments

	2020	2019
	€	€
Within 1 year	164,771	173,662
Between 1 and 5 years	482,984	570,918
Greater than 5 years	459,672	540,790
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,107,427</b>	<b>1,285,370</b>

### 28) Related Party Transactions

No related party transactions took place during the year ended 31 December 2020 (2019: NIL).

### 29) Post Balance Sheet Events

There were no events or conditions subsequent to the year end that require disclosure in or adjustment to the financial statements.

### 30) Approval of Financial Statements

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 28th April 2021.

The following do not form part of the audited accounts

# APPENDIX - DISCLOSURE OF STATUTORY & CORPORATE SUPPORT

Details of statutory funding received in 2020

Name of Grantor	Name of Grant	Purpose of Grant	Original Amount and Term of Grant	Amount of Grant taken into Income in Current Year	Deferred Income
Pobal and Department of Environment, Community and Local Government	Scheme to Support National Organisations 2019-2022	To enhance specialists supports, strategic partnerships as well as improving organisational development	€269,172 - 3 years	€80,432	€50,068
Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	Community and Voluntary Pillar	Assist the Organisation in its role as a contributor to Public Policy	€30,144 - 1 year	€30,144	Nil
Pobal , Department of Rural and Community Development (Lead) and Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Sponsor)	Dormant Accounts Funds Measure 2	To fund Family Carers Ireland to deliver the empowering carers project. The aim is to recruit three staff members to deliver a number of actions to support family carers including training programmes, workshops, engagement and support initiatives, information and resources	€645,428 - 18 months	€362,836	Nil
Department of Health and National Lottery	Palliative Care Grant	Palliative Care Programme	€50,000	Nil	€6,644
Health Service Executive	Dementia 5 steps programme	Support for Dementia	€270,000 - 1 year	€252,235	Nil
National Lottery	National Lottery	Provide respite for Family Carers	€89,573	€14,014	€75,559

# REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

**Charity Name:** Family Carers Ireland

**Company Registered Number:** 572819

**Charity Registered Number:** CHY 10962

**Charities Regulator Number:** 20029029

## Directors at 31.12.20

Shane McCarthy (Chairperson)  
 Triona Fortune (Vice Chairperson)  
 Antionette Green  
 Barbara Kovach  
 Peter O'Connell  
 Michael O'Neill  
 Rosemary Kratschmar  
 Eilish Smith (re-appointed 26 September 2020)  
 Veronica Baylon (re-appointed 26 September 2020)  
 Johanne Powell (re-appointed 26 September 2020)  
 Cora Long (appointed 26 September 2020)  
 Robert Anderson (appointed 26 September 2020)  
 Tom Jordan (appointed 26 September 2020)  
 Graham Knowles (appointed 26 September 2020)

## CEO & Executive Management Team:

John Dunne  
 Padraic Murrinan  
 Catherine Cox  
 Kathy McLoughlin  
 Mary Conway

## Secretary & Registered Office:

Mary Conway,  
 Unit 1, Hibernia Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8

**Independent Auditor:** Mazars, Block 3, Harcourt Centre, Harcourt Road, Dublin 2

**Principal Bankers:** Bank of Ireland, 2 College Green, Dublin 2

**Solicitors:** William Fry, 2 Grand Canal Square, Dublin 2

Moran and Ryan, Baggot Hall, 41 Baggot Street Lower, Dublin 2

## Board Committees at 31 December 2020:

### Audit & Risk Management:

Grace Dempsey (Chairperson)  
 John Lonergan  
 Triona Fortune  
 Peter O'Connell  
 Luke Mooney

### Finance & Organisation:

Michael O'Neill (Chairperson)  
 Shane McCarthy  
 Graham Knowles  
 Tom Jordan

### Marketing & Fundraising

Peter O'Connell (Chairperson)  
 Barbara Kovach  
 Eilish Smith  
 Rosemary Kratschmar  
 Antionette Green  
 Mischa McInerney

### Quality & Safety:

Triona Fortune (Chairperson)  
 Rosemary Kratschmar  
 Graham Knowles  
 John Hillery  
 Ann Gardiner

### Carer Support & Engagement

Johanne Powell (Chairperson)  
 Barbara Kovach  
 Cora Long  
 Eilish Smith  
 Veronica Baylon  
 Antionette Green

### Research & Policy:

Rob Anderson (Chairperson)  
 Johanne Powell  
 Veronica Baylon  
 Frank Goodwin  
 Deirdre O'Donnell  
 John Healy





Family Carers Ireland, Unit 1, Hibernia Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8

[www.familycarers.ie](http://www.familycarers.ie) | National Freephone Careline 1800 24 07 24



Charity Number 10692.