

Press Release – June 8th (June 9<sup>th</sup> 6 am Radio/TV Embargo)

## **Thousands of Family Carers take part in 8<sup>th</sup> National Carers Week, June 9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>**

### **82% of Family Carers impacted by cuts in supports.**

Family Carers will have the opportunity to take part in more than 150 events across the country this week as the 8<sup>th</sup> National Carers Week (June 9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>) is launched in Dublin to-day by Nuala Carey. National Carers Week enables carers to take a day for themselves, and to participate in events such as pamper days, informative gatherings, live entertainment and ‘open days’ at local attractions.

Cuts to the respite grant, changes to medical card provision and other cutbacks are having a significant impact on Family Carers of people with neurological conditions, according to a nationwide survey published recently by the Neurological Alliance of Ireland in association with Care Alliance Ireland.

In the survey of over 170 family carers, 82% reported being impacted by cuts to home care packages over the past three years, 77% by cuts to respite services, and 70% by cuts to home help. Over one fifth of carers could not access any respite services.

Another finding was that 42% of respondents had given up work to look after the person with a neurological condition, while 64% reported a significant fall in family income since the onset of the condition.

Speaking about the findings, Liam O Sullivan, Executive Director of Care Alliance, noted: “It is clear from this survey that successive cuts to supports for Family Carers are creating a climate of worry, uncertainty and distress. This is very disappointing in the light of the publication in 2012 of the National Carers Strategy, which explicitly commits to valuing the role of Family Carers in Ireland. We know from the findings of previous surveys that other family members remain the most important source of support for Family Carers, taking up the slack as State supports are further reduced.”

Supporting Carers Week again this year, well known TV presenter Nuala Carey said: “I know all too well how important Family Carers are, particularly in enabling people to continue to live at home. The week is a fantastic celebration of the contribution Family Carers make to our loved ones’ lives, and it’s an opportunity for us all to do something extra special for Family Carers in our community.”

Care Alliance Ireland, which is responsible for coordinating Carers Week, says that every person in Ireland has a chance this week to acknowledge the contribution of our 187,000 Family Carers.

“This week we should focus on doing something for those that contribute so much to Irish society. Whether you just call in, make a meal, offer help and support or, if they are far away, give them a call to say ‘you are doing something really important’, there is a huge value in simply saying ‘thank you’” says Liam O’Sullivan, Executive Director of Care Alliance Ireland.

National Carers Week, now in its eighth year, is coordinated by Care Alliance Ireland in partnership with nine other leading Irish charities who support Family Carers: The Alzheimer Society, The Carers Association, Caring for Carers, the Irish Cancer Society, The Disability Federation, MS Ireland, The Parkinson’s Association, Brí, and The Irish Hospice Foundation.

For further information, contact: Liam O’Sullivan 087 207 3265 or Jennifer Graham 086 883 4942, E-mail: [ndo@carealliance.ie](mailto:ndo@carealliance.ie)

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## **Notes to the Editor:**

Family Carers are usually immediate relatives who provide very high levels of care, at home, for children and adults with severe disabilities, frail older people and people who are terminally ill.

The 2011 Census estimates that there are in the region of 187,000 Family Carers in Ireland. It identifies in excess of 4,000 carers under the age of 15. Census 2011 also details the number of Family Carers in each county.

The national launch of Carers Week takes place in The Irish Hospice Foundation offices, Morrison Chambers, 32 Nassau Street, Dublin 2 on Monday June 9<sup>th</sup> at 11 am. The Young Carer of the Year, Niamh Duffy, will speak of her caring experience, together with RTÉ's Nuala Carey. The winner of the 'How you Care' schools competition will also be announced. Family Carers will be available at the launch for interviews from 10:30 am, and throughout the week.

A number of special events will take place during the week, including the launch of an app for 'sharing the care' (Tuesday June 10<sup>th</sup>) the 'Support for Carers' Mental Health' campaign (Tuesday June 10<sup>th</sup>), and several regional events for Family Carers.

Photos from earlier closed photo shoot will be sent to Picture Desks on Sunday June 8<sup>th</sup>. (Photographer: Feargal Ward)

A continually updated list of Carers Week events in each county is available at [www.carersweek.ie/events](http://www.carersweek.ie/events).

Care Alliance Ireland is leading the coordination of Carers Week: [www.carealliance.ie](http://www.carealliance.ie).