



The National Carers' Strategy
Recognised, Supported, Empowered

Fourth Progress Report
September 2015 – December 2016

Introduction

Vision Statement

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

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

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

This is the fourth Progress Report on implementation and covers the period September 2015– December 2016. Future reports will be on a calendar year basis.

National Goal 1

Recognise the value and contribution of carers and promote their inclusion in decisions relating to the person that they caring for

Objective 1.1		
Strengthen awareness and recognition of the role and contribution of carers at national, regional and local level		
Action	Department	Update for Sept 2015-Dec 2016
1.1.1 Promote a better recognition of the role and contribution of carers at a national level	Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	The Department administers the Scheme to support National Organisations and this scheme provides multi-annual funding to a number of national organisations towards core costs associated with the provision of services. A number of carers' organisations were successful in securing funding under the scheme for the period mid-2016 to mid-2019. Further details are available at: http://www.housing.gov.ie/community/community-and-voluntary-supports/minister-coveney-announces-eu164m-community-voluntary
	Education	The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) continues to consult with parents of special needs children as part of its National Consultative Forum which is currently being reconstituted with representatives from the Department of Education and Skills being included. As part of the 2017 SOLAS/Education Training Board (ETB) business planning process SOLAS will request ETBs to set out how training needs for carer organisations will be addressed at local level.
	Health	Work on the policy proposals to be brought to Government for a new Transport Support Scheme is at an advanced stage. The Department of Health is continuing to seek a solution which will best meet the aim of supporting people with severe disabilities, who require additional income to contribute towards the cost of their mobility needs, while remaining within the available budget and satisfying all legal and equality concerns. The Programme for a Partnership Government acknowledges the ongoing drafting of primary legislation for a new Transport Support Scheme. The Health (Transport Support) Bill is included in the Government Legislation Programme.

		<p>TILDA is a nationally representative longitudinal study of the health, economic and social circumstances of c. 8,000 Irish adults aged 50 and over. It is based in Trinity College Dublin and four waves of data collection have been completed since 2010. The Department of Health has provided €12 million in funding for TILDA since 2009, and in 2016 agreed to provide a further €10 million to enable the study to continue for the period 2017-2022. The other main funder is the Atlantic Philanthropies. TILDA collects data on informal care provision and receipt of care by participants that can be linked to other health, economic and social data to examine risks and outcomes for participants.</p> <p>IDS-TILDA is the intellectual disability supplement of the main TILDA study. Wave 2 of IDS-TILDA included a Carer's Self Completion Questionnaire for carers of older adults with an intellectual disability living within family settings. The Department of Health provided funding of €300,000 between 2010 and 2015 for Waves 1 and 2 of IDS-TILDA, and has agreed to provide further funding of €600,000 for Wave 3 between 2016 and 2018.</p>
	Social Protection	<p>The Department continues to provide annual reports on "Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services" including information relating to illness, disability and caring.</p>
	HSE	<p>The Carers Strategy, carers and carer representative organisations are given recognition through the provision of supports and funding to National and local Carer Groups who advocate on behalf of carers.</p> <p>The Health Service Executive (HSE) Multi Divisional Carer Strategy group continues to support the process to progress the actions in The Carers Strategy.</p> <p>The role and contribution of carers is being promoted as an integral part of the plan for 'Acute services on Promoting a Culture of Patient Partnership within Acute Services'.</p> <p>The HSE has been working in partnership with HIQA and the DOH to develop the National Patient Experience Survey Programme, which will be implemented in May 2017 across 41 acute hospital locations. Feedback from Family Carers Ireland has been used to inform this work, and their contribution to the development of solutions in response to the findings will be most important.</p>

		<p>In February 2016 the Mental Health Division (MHD) appointed a Head of Mental Health Engagement to present the views of service users and family carers at the National MHD Management Team, and to further the recommendations of the Service Users, Family Member and Carer Reference Group – establishing engagement structures at all levels in the mental health services. The work has included meeting Family Carers Ireland and their Mental Health Subgroup.</p> <p>The planning and recruitment of 9 Area Leads (Mental Health Engagement posts) to join the CHO Mental Health Services Management teams.</p>
	<p>DCYA</p>	<p>The implementation capacity for local Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSC) improved in 2016 including the mainstreaming of the local CYPSC co-ordinator post to Tusla (Child and Family Agency). 12 new CYPSC co-ordinators were appointed. Examples of CYPSE initiatives include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Young Carers Implementation Group is a sub group of Donegal CYPSC and supports a Young Carers’ Group. The project aims to identify, engage and support young carers aged 12-24 years; raise awareness of the role young carers have within the community, the challenges faced and the valuable care that they provide. <p>The Young Carers Group is facilitated by Donegal Youth Service. Supports provided include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual needs identification and support plan • One to one support • Young Carers peer activity group • Respite and fun activities • School support • Training programmes to help young carers stay safe and well. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both Galway CYPSC and Roscommon CYPSC have identified young people caring for parents with mental ill-health as a group that require additional supports. During 2016: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary research into the nature and extent of young people acting as carers was undertaken. • Existing support materials compiled. • Meeting held with representative from Roscommon Young Carers Group.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact made with Family Carers Ireland and with existing Carers Support Group in Donegal. • CYPSC seed funding used to support Roscommon Young Carers Group <p>It is expected that further actions relating to this target group will be agreed during 2017 (Tusla).</p>
	Jobs	Subject to the Department's limited role, the Workplace Relations Commission will continue to encourage employers and employees to provide flexible workplaces that meet the needs of both employers and employees and supporting employment rights which includes Carers Leave
1.1.2 Ensure that carers' needs are considered in the development of any policies that might affect them (such as the Review of Disability Policy – <i>DOH</i>), the National Positive Ageing Strategy and the Children and Young People's Policy Framework 2012-2017 (forthcoming)	Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	The Department is supportive of consultation as appropriate in relation to policy development and implementation.
	Education	The NCSE continues to engage with groups of stakeholders in the development of its policy advice and is currently concluding significant consultations as part of the development of new policy advice on the Special Needs Assistants Scheme. This consultation included a general call for submissions from all groups, including carers Groups

		<p>In the context of implementing the Goal of Active Inclusion (enabling all citizens to participate in Further Education and Training) under the FET Strategy, Solas has commissioned a research project to look at the barriers to participation in FET. As part of this process a comprehensive consultation process invited contributions from a diverse range of stakeholders groups which included an invitation to carer stakeholder groups to participate and contribute to the process. The research is scheduled for publication in Q1 2017.</p> <p>SOLAS/ETBI published the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Strategy in 2016. Implementation will support increased capacity for flexibility and access to FET provision which will include enhanced Online and Blended Learning approaches supporting the individual needs of learners, including carers for greater flexibility in delivery and access.</p>
	<p>Health</p>	<p>A number of Working Groups have been established to support the implementation of a multi-year project to reform disability services, in line with the recommendations in the report of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services in Ireland. One of these Working Groups, People with Disabilities and Community Involvement, aims to strengthen existing national and local consultative processes to build a Participation Framework which will be designed to meet the changing needs of service users with the purpose of enabling persons with disabilities, carers, families and the wider community to have a meaningful role and voice in service design and delivery. A report entitled <i>Plan for Effective Participation in Decision Making by People with Disabilities</i> has now been completed by the Working Group, which is chaired by Inclusion Ireland and will be forwarded to the Transforming Lives Steering Group in Quarter 1, 2017</p> <p>The National Dementia Strategy emphasises the need to support people with dementia and their carers. The three strands of the €27.5 million National Dementia Strategy Implementation Programme, co-funded by the HSE and the Atlantic Philanthropies, contain measures to support both people with dementia and their carers (through 1. the provision of dementia specific intensive homecare packages, 2. upskilling of GPs and primary care teams to diagnose and manage dementia, including a PREPARED website with a directory of local services and supports, and 3. the <i>Dementia Understand Together</i> information and awareness campaign). The Dementia Strategy Monitoring Group includes a representative of carers for</p>

		<p>people with dementia.</p> <p>The Department of Health secured Dormant Accounts funding in 2016 to enable the continuation of a number of innovative community supports initiatives for people with dementia and their carers in Kinsale, Mayo and Blackrock-Stillorgan. The funding also included provision for the national roll out by the HSE of assistive technology supports for people with dementia and their carers (see also 2.1.4).</p> <p>At an international level, the Department of Health, with support from the HSE, Family Carers Ireland and the Care Alliance, is contributing actively to the work of the British Irish Council Social Inclusion Work Sector on carers (2016-2017), which will culminate in a BIC Ministerial meeting in late 2017/early 2018 and will focus on the exchange of information and good practice in supporting carers.</p>
	Social Protection	<p>The DSP regularly engages with groups representing Carers. Carers' representative groups attended the DSP pre-budget forums in 2015 and 2016.</p> <p>The periodic engagement of the DSP with members of the Community and Voluntary Pillar of Society, including organisations representing Carers, continues to provide an opportunity for these groups to represent the needs of Carers.</p> <p>The DSP also meets with stakeholders to ensure that they are informed of relevant policy developments within the Department and with the NCS Monitoring Group to discuss actions proposed by the group.</p> <p>The DSP continues to host the Annual Carers' Forum.</p>
	Justice	<p>The new National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2020 will be finalised and published soon. The Strategy reflects broad and extensive consultations with interested parties, including carers of persons with disabilities.</p> <p>The Disability Awareness Funding Programme launched by the Department in July 2015 continued in 2016, with the awarding of six grants. The programme aims to raise awareness</p>

		<p>of disability and is open to applications from carers and other associations and bodies supporting people with disabilities.</p> <p>The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 was signed into law on 30 December 2015 and is being commenced on a phased basis. The Act provides a modern statutory framework to support decision-making by adults with capacity difficulties, including those with mental health difficulties. The specific decision making supports available to persons under the Act are decision-making assistants, co-decision-makers and decision-making representatives who will be supervised by the Director of the Decision Support Service.</p> <p>Under the Act a person may appoint a decision-making assistant – typically a family member or carer – through a formal decision-making assistance agreement to support him or her to access information or to understand, make and express decisions. Decision-making responsibility remains with the person. A person can also appoint a trusted family member or friend as a co-decision-maker to make decisions jointly with him or her under a co-decision-making agreement. Decision-making responsibility is shared jointly between the person and the co-decision-maker. For the small minority of people who are not able to make decisions even with help, the Act provides for the Circuit Court to appoint a decision-making representative. A decision-making representative will make decisions on behalf of the person but must abide by the guiding principles and must reflect the person’s will and preferences where possible. The Act also provides for forward planning with enduring powers of attorney and advance healthcare directives that allow someone with capacity to plan ahead for circumstances in which they may not have capacity in the future.</p>
	HSE	<p>The HSE continues to engage with carer organisations at local, regional and national level to discuss operational and common issues.</p> <p>The role of carers is acknowledged and considered in patient engagement structures across the HSE.</p> <p>The role of carers is included and outlined in the National Healthcare Charters for adults and children.</p>
	DCYA	Implementation of <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> is ongoing across government. Two

		<p>annual reports are available on DCYA’s website. One of the key policy priorities under Outcome 5 – Connected, respected and contributing to their world – is the aim to ensure positive networks of family, friends and communities. The Government recognises in <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> that children or young people may experience difficulties maintaining friendships, education and employment due to the need for them to take on caring responsibilities within their families. The key Government activity in this area is to ensure children and young people are supported in their caring role.</p> <p>Tusla’s 50 Key Messages¹ includes a message about children as carers and includes a brief guide for practitioners in the delivery of support services and links to the community for young carers. 104 Parenting Support Champions across Tusla and partners are being trained in dissemination of the 50 Key Messages. (Tusla)</p> <p>DCYA and Tusla attended the 2016 Annual Carers Forum and in September organised a meeting with the National Carers’ Strategy Monitoring Group led by Family Carers’ Ireland.</p>
	Jobs	See 1.1.1 above
1.1.3 Build on the work begun in Census 2011 to establish a comprehensive statistical profile of Family Caring in Ireland	DCYA	The 2016 Census of Population in April 2016 included the question on providing ‘regular unpaid help’, using exactly the same wording as in Census 2011 in order to allow the data on carers to be trended forward.
1.1.4 Continue to convene an annual carers forum to	Social Protection	The Department continues to host the Annual Carers’ Forum and invites representation from the Department of Health, the HSE, the Department of Social Protection, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Tusla, the Department of

¹ www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla_50_Key_Messages_for_Parenting_Support: Section 6-Paragraph 38- “Children as Carers”

provide carers with a voice at policy level		<p>Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.</p> <p>In 2014, following consultation with Carers' representative groups, the format was revised to ensure that the forum maximises the opportunity for dialogue and enhances the relevance of the themes discussed at the forum. The forum took place in February 2015 and February 2016.</p>
1.1.5 Support national organisations representing the interests of carers	Health	<p>Carer organisations have received support through National Lottery grants awarded by the Minister for Health.</p>
	Social Protection	<p>The Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2014 included a provision for €1m proposed by DSP under the theme of Personal and Social Development of Persons who are Economically or Socially Disadvantaged for the provision of Training for Family Carers and the development of support networks. Funding in excess of €900,000 has been made available to 16 groups including Family Carers Ireland, Care Alliance Ireland, West Cork Carers Support Group Limited, Kerry Respite Care Limited.</p> <p>A further .5m is being allocated, under the Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2016 for a training and support measure to provide transitional support to family carers who have ceased their caring role. Discussions with Pobal, who will administer and evaluate the measure on behalf of the DSP, on the measure specific guidelines are ongoing.</p>
	HSE	<p>Refer to 1.1.1 & 1.1.2</p> <p>The Health Service Executive (HSE) Multi Divisional Carer Strategy group continues to support the process across the service divisions to progress the actions in The Carers Strategy.</p> <p>The HSE provides grant aid to carer organisations at both national and local level through the following:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 39 • National Lottery Grants • Carers Week
<p>1.1.6 Promote more proactive approaches to the identification of carers and to addressing their needs among staff and organisations that are likely to encounter individuals in caring situations (e.g. health and personal social service providers, and particularly primary care team members, community and education professionals).</p>	<p>Education</p>	<p>The NCSE has published a number of information booklets for parents and guardians with special educational needs, including Choosing a School; Post School Education and Training, the SNA Scheme and a number of information booklets on the different categories of disability.</p> <p>The NCSE are finalising a new booklet for parents and carers on the implementation of the new model for resource teachers which will be published shortly</p> <p>The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) platform on the DES website provides a section for parents that includes a Parent Information leaflet on the NEPS service and a section for parents entitled FAQs. See link below http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_parent_leaflet.pdf</p> <p>In the context of implementing the Goal of Active Inclusion (enabling all citizens to participate in Further Education and Training) under the FET Strategy, Solas has commissioned a research project to look at the barriers to participation in FET. As part of this process a comprehensive consultation process invited contributions from a diverse range of stakeholders groups which included an invitation to carer stakeholder groups to participate and contribute to the process. The research is scheduled for publication in Q1 2017.</p> <p>SOLAS/ETBI published the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Strategy in 2016. Implementation will support increased capacity for flexibility and access to FET provision which will include enhanced Online and Blended Learning approaches supporting the individual needs of learners, including carers for greater flexibility in delivery and access. The Professional Development Service for Teachers has produced two resources on 'Personal Safety', one for junior cycle and one for senior cycle. Both were published in 2016 and provide up-to-date advice in line with other policy developments in recent years. For example, the</p>

		<p>junior cycle booklet can be accessed at http://www.sphe.ie/downloads/resources/Junior-Cycle-Personal-Safety-Handbook-April-2016.pdf . Caregiving is identified as a core area relevant to personal safety, and within that it is explained that ‘It should be borne in mind that some young people themselves are carers in circumstances where a parent is ill or unable to look after themselves. This should be acknowledged by the teacher’.</p> <p>Thus, the guidelines are directed at both students in need of care, and who are carers themselves in certain circumstances. Subsequently, great emphasis is placed on reminding students of the support structures within the school, and to help them identify trusted adults to whom they could talk if they needed to. Details of these e.g. Child-line, are provided in Appendix 3 of the booklet.</p> <p>These booklets are supported by online resources, and by CPD in important aspects of the SPHE curriculum.</p> <p>The recent launch (January 2017) of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, due to be implemented in all schools from September 2017, will reinforce key SPHE messages further. The Guidelines show most clearly that such important issues are as much part of an overall wellbeing ‘package’ for students as they are for delivery in any individual subject space.</p>
	HSE	<p><u>Carer Needs Assessments</u></p> <p>The HSE has continued the development of a specific Carer Needs Assessment Tool as part of the Inter RAI Single Assessment Tool. Following an Irish Pilot of the Carer Needs Assessment in 2015, a final draft Assessment commenced international field testing in 8 countries in two phases: 2016 and 2017.</p> <p>In Ireland in 2016 four community care sites were selected in Dublin North, Kildare, Roscommon and Cork city to field test the draft Assessment tool. A random selection of older people in receipt of care were invited to participate in the study.</p> <p>In addition in 2016 Family Carers undertook a paper based Carer Needs Assessment Tool to be followed by a further assessment six months later in 2017. Care recipients undertook two</p>

		<p>electronic SAT (interRAI Home Care) Assessments.</p> <p>The second phase is planned to conclude by September 2017, after which interRAI will analyse data from all countries to develop a final Carers Needs Assessment. It is expected that the final assessment will be complete by 2018.</p> <p><u>CHO work on carer identification/support</u> CHOs report proactive responses to support this action through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working and grant aiding relevant stakeholders to support identification of carers. • Primary Care Teams, Public Health Nursing, individual Disciplines identify and support individual Carers in their day to day work. • Information Sharing at Clinical Team Meetings and/or case Discussions/Family Meetings. • Carer involvement in care planning for service user (with consent from service user) takes into account the carer and family situation. • Advising Carers on entitlements, local support groups and support services (including respite services) available. • Availability of leaflets/posters (literature) in Health Service Executive centres • the Health Service Executive dedicated Carers Webpage detailing the support services available to carers – www.hse.ie/carers
<p>1.1.7 Promote carer self-identification initiatives and encourage carers to formally identify themselves to service providers</p>	<p>HSE</p>	<p>The HSE adopts a variety of approaches across the CHOs to encourage carers to formally identify themselves to service providers. The different approaches demonstrate the different requirements of carers across the different services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary care teams, including with support from the public health nursing service, are pivotal in encouraging carers to self-identify. • Network Specialist Teams and Services e.g. Children’s Disability Teams • Health Area Specialist Teams and Services e.g. Home Care Package Co-ordinators /

		<p>Managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carer Support groups • Alzheimer cafes • Training courses for carers • Information literature in HSE centres, the HSE infoline and on line on the HSE dedicated Carers Webpage www.hse.ie/carers • Working in partnership with Family Carers Ireland and other relevant organisations.
<p>Objective 1.2 Include carers in care planning and decision making for those that they care for</p>		
Action	Department	Update for Sept 2015-Dec 2016
<p>1.2.1 Involve carers, as appropriate, as partners in care planning and provision by health and personal social service providers and particularly by the primary care team</p>	<p>HSE</p>	<p>Refer to 1.1.6</p> <p>The HSE acknowledges the importance of a partnership approach to care planning and provision while respecting the preferences of both carers and the person to whom they are providing care.</p> <p>Carer needs are discussed at primary care team clinical meetings, local placement forums or hospital / community MDT meetings (for home care) as part of the overall assessment and care planning processes.</p> <p>CHOs report that carers are involved in care planning and carers may attend such meetings where appropriate. It is important to note that carers' involvement in the care planning and decision making for those they care for must be with permission from the client and where appropriate.</p> <p>The Mental Health Division (MHD) aims to consistently involve carers in its service developments. A MHD national initiative focussed on Advancing Recovery in Ireland (ARI) aiming to develop more recovery-orientated mental health services progressed during the reporting period. A Manager Partner in ARI with a family carer background was appointed.</p> <p>By December 2016 there were 13 ARI sites across the country. All sites have active involvement from Service Users, Family Members/Carers and Service Providers. Service</p>

		<p>improvement/ recovery committees have been established in all its sites. This period has also seen planning and resourcing with the aim that by Dec. 2017 ARI will have expanded to all services across the country.</p> <p>There are now 5 Recovery Colleges based in Mayo, Galway/Roscommon. Midwest, South East, and North East. Through capacity building there are now 20 Recovery Consultants trained and available to support the upcoming ARI site developments in 2017.</p>
<p>1.2.2 Identify carers and their involvement in discharge planning, including their details provided in discharge letters to GPs</p>	<p>HSE</p>	<p>In the National Healthcare Charter the HSE commits that “<i>We will involve you and your family and carers in decision making about your healthcare and will take account of your preferences and values.</i>”</p> <p>Carer involvement in the discharge planning process is identified in the HSE’s <i>Integrated Care Guidance: A Practical Guide to Discharge and Transfer from Hospital</i> published in 2014. Step 6 of the Guidance specifically identifies the need to involve service users and carers so that they make informed decisions and choices.</p> <p>Under the auspices of the Acute Hospitals Division, <i>Patient and Public Partnership</i>, Family Carers Ireland were introduced to PALS co-ordinators across Acute hospital services for the purposes of building partnerships and working together to improve both patients’ and carers’ experience of Acute Hospital Services.</p> <p>Family Carers Ireland was provided with an opportunity to give feedback on the National Patient Experience Survey Programme.</p> <p>To share opportunities for embedding the needs of carers/patients into existing and developing strategy, Patient Liaison staff are now working in a number of larger hospitals across the country.</p> <p>In accordance with the Mental Health Commission requirements, each Mental Health Unit must have individual care plans which include a discharge planning process with carers involved as appropriate.</p>

		The provision of carer details in discharge letters to GPs can only be done in line with the National Policy on Consent in Healthcare. Proactive approaches to working in partnership with carers will be explored as part of the proposed plans on patient and public partnership across hospital groups.
Objective 1.3		
Recognise the needs of carers by the provision of income supports		
Action	Department	Update for Sept 2015-Dec 2016
1.3.1 Provide regular benefits advice sessions and information through the application process	Social Protection	<p>The Department provides information on carers' entitlements in respect of its income maintenance schemes through the DSP website and a range of alternative media. A full set of operational guidelines, including information on carer's benefit, carer's allowance and the carer's support grant, is published for each scheme.</p> <p>Information on the website can be made available on request in different formats including braille and translated to different languages.</p> <p>Applicants who are disallowed on grounds other than medical are advised that they may have an entitlement to the Carer's Support Grant. The award letter has also been changed to include the line about Carer's Allowance being a taxable source of income in the main body of the award letter.</p> <p>The Department of Social Protection continues to keep their processes at transition points under review and will continue to consult with sectoral representatives groups on the review process for Carer's Allowance.</p> <p>Information on Carers' entitlements is available at each Intreo office.</p> <p>The Dormant Accounts Plan makes provision for the dissemination of resource information for Carers and to provide supports to reduce social isolation.</p>
1.3.2 Ensure that carers can	Social Protection	The Department provided an advert on Carer's Benefit and Carer's Leave to a large number of trade unions and associations in late 2016 who made them available to in excess of

access benefits advice as early as possible when their caring role begins		<p>230,000 employees through their newsletters or other bulletins.</p> <p>Information on Carers' entitlements is available at each Intreo office.</p> <p>Link to Family Carers Ireland website included on DSP Carers' webpage.</p>
1.3.3 Publicise more widely that the Carer's Allowance can be shared by two carers providing care on a part time basis	Social Protection	<p>An information page on Care-Sharing has been added to the Department's Rates Booklet (SW19) for 2017.</p> <p>DSP contributed information to research conducted by the Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe funded by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). This is a comparative study on care leave models and the financial support caregivers receive in different European Member States</p>
1.3.4 Continue to work to reduce waiting periods for processing of Carer's Allowance applications and appeals	Social Protection	<p>Although waiting increased in late 2015 and the early part of 2016 due to significant and ongoing increases in the numbers applying for CA, any backlog has been eliminated in the second half of 2016. Additional resources and continuous business process improvement is being applied to ensure that the waiting time reduces for applicants.</p> <p>Following consultation with Carers' Representative Groups, proposed content changes on the website and forms will be aimed at encouraging applicants to provide all evidence at application stage, thereby reducing initial refusals and appeals.</p>
1.3.5 Review existing transition arrangements for carers at the end of their caring	Social Protection	<p>Carers now qualify for carer's allowance for 12 weeks and carer's benefit for a period of six weeks following the loss of a loved one. The increase to 12 weeks for Carer's Allowance recipients was introduced in 2016.</p> <p>Budget 2017 provided that from January 2017, Carer's Allowance will continue to be paid for 12 weeks where the care recipient is permanently admitted to a hospital/nursing home.</p>

role.		
National Goal 2		
Support carers to manage their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing		
Objective 2.1		
Promote the development of supports and services to protect the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of carers		
Action	Department	Update for Sept 2015-Dec 2016
2.1.1 Raise awareness among health and personal social service providers of the physical and emotional health issues that carers may experience	HSE	<p>The HSE continues to progress the development of the Carers' Needs Assessment as part of the Single Assessment Tool which will identify and raise awareness of carers' needs.</p> <p>Refer also to 1.1.6</p> <p>At CHO level, awareness is raised through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary care teams including the public health nursing service • Network Specialist Teams and Services e.g. Children's Disability Teams • Health Area Specialist Teams and Services e.g. Home Care Package Co-ordinators / Managers • Staff training • Individualised care & support plans • Carer Support groups • Alzheimer cafes • Information on Training courses for carers • Working in partnership with Family Carers Ireland and other relevant organisations.
2.1.2 Encourage carers to attend their GP for an annual health check	Health	<p>Government policy is to move towards universal GP care free at the point of access. This commenced with the extension of free GP care for all children aged under 6 on 1st July 2015 and to all persons aged 70 and over on 5th August 2015.</p> <p>The Programme for Government also commits to extending in phases, and subject to negotiations with GPs, free GP care to under-18s. Legislative changes will be required for any such extension of GP care without fees to further cohorts of the population. The extension of</p>

		<p>GP care without fees to children aged 6 – 11 years is one of the priority actions listed in the HSE’s National Service Plan 2017, however the timetable is subject to the outcome of discussions with GP representatives on this and other contractual matters. Preparations for next phase of engagement with GP representatives on the development of a new GP contract are underway and initial meetings are expected to take place in early 2017.</p> <p>Through a combination of the phased roll-out of universal GP care and the means – tested medical and GP cards scheme, over 2.15 million people have access to a GP service without fees.</p>
	HSE	<p>Across services in the CHOs, carers are encouraged to look after their health and wellbeing and this includes visiting their GP when appropriate.</p> <p>Under the Public Health: Health and Wellbeing Division, ‘Household contacts of at-risk persons’ are a priority group for influenza vaccination. GPs and pharmacies are reminded of this by Public Health when information is disseminated at the start of the annual influenza vaccination campaign.</p>
<p>2.1.3 Develop and roll out a single assessment tool for older people and ensure that the views of carers as well as the people they care for are taken into account</p>	HSE	<p>Services for Older People are progressing the Single Assessment Tool (SAT).</p> <p>Since May 2016 three acute hospitals have started the implementation of SAT – Beaumont Hospital, Tallaght Hospital and University Hospital Galway.</p> <p>Multidisciplinary staff in these hospitals were nominated to become SAT assessors and were equipped with and trained to use the standard HSE tablet device. They completed the SAT training programme and are completing SAT assessment for older people seeking access to NHSS and HCP schemes.</p> <p>Information from assessments helps to integrate care and promote multidisciplinary working as information is available to all staff with SAT access for onward referral. These assessments are also considered by members of the Local Placement Forum who make a determination on entry into long term care based on the older persons’ wishes and assessed need.</p>

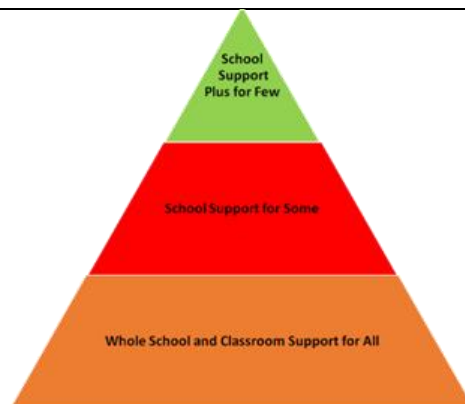
		<p>Staff in the community areas surrounding these hospitals – Dublin North, Galway and Dublin South West have also commenced SAT implementation. Continuity and integration of care between acute and community sectors will be facilitated and promoted through the implementation of SAT. The implementation of SAT will be progressed across all CHOs in 2017.</p> <p>The HSE continued the development of a specific Carer Needs Assessment Tool as part of the Inter RAI Single Assessment Tool.</p> <p>Refer to 1.1.6</p>
2.1.4 Continue to implement the recommendations of the Home Solutions Report (13) on telecare	HSE	<p>In October 2016 the National Office, Services for Older people was granted €300,000 by the Department of Health from Dormant Accounts funding to assist and facilitate the promotion of the use of assistive technology for older people.</p> <p>The project aims are to use these funds to set up similar systems to the Assistive Technology Library in South Tipperary across CHOs. This library was set up in 2011 as part of the Genio fund and allowed a show casing of equipment and “hands on” experience to facilitate learning and experience of the products and hence support people with dementia and their carers.</p> <p>Procurement processes for the ordering of the equipment commenced and it is hoped that the assistive technology libraries will be in situ in most CHOs in 2017.</p> <p>Community groups are funded through Local Authorities to provide telecare initiatives. Where this is in place, HSE staff members, usually from public health nursing, co-operate with these local initiatives, supporting a referral pathway to the service.</p> <p>Resources continue to be a challenge in this area.</p>
2.1.5 Promote	HSE	A National Safeguarding office was established in 2015 to provide leadership, oversight and

<p>awareness of adult and child protection services that are in place</p>		<p>coordination for all aspects of policy and practice in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults.</p> <p>A total of 8,000 people received safeguarding training in 2016. Information on safeguarding and a list of protection teams for each CHO is available on the HSE Website.</p> <p>The HSE established the National Children First office to ensure the health and social care services of the HSE meet their responsibilities under Children First 2011 and Children First legislation (when enacted).</p> <p>The National Children First office is also responsible for ensuring the national programme of implementation and ongoing compliance with the requirements of Children First policy and legislation are being met at national, regional and local levels.</p> <p>The fifteen Training and Development Officers operating from the National Children First office support the Community Health Organisations and Hospital Groups in their implementation of Children First.</p> <p>The Child Protection & Welfare Policy was finalised in 2016 with a planned launch of the policy across the HSE in 2017. Each Division, Community Health Organisation and Acute Hospital group are utilising their Implementation Oversight Groups to develop guidelines for their services and implementation plans for 2017.</p> <p>A mandatory training programme for all HSE/HSE funded employees in Children First is available on www.hseland.ie. "An Introduction to Children First" is an online e-learning programme in relation to the responsibilities of all HSE/HSE funded staff, students and volunteers under Children First.</p> <p>A generic e-Learning training module is also available to sports groups, non-funded groups and other interested parties. Additional information is also available on the HSE Children First Website.</p>
<p>2.1.6 Review the</p>	<p>Health</p>	<p>The Nursing Homes Support Scheme is a system of financial support for those in need of long-</p>

<p>Fair Deal system of financing nursing home care with a view to developing a secure and equitable system of financing for community and long-term care which supports older people to stay in their own homes.</p>		<p>term nursing home care. When the Scheme commenced in 2009, a commitment was made that it would be reviewed after three years. The report of the Review was published in July 2015.</p> <p>An Interdepartmental/Agency Working Group has been established to progress the recommendations contained in the Review. This Group is chaired by the Department of Health and includes representatives from the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the HSE, the Revenue Commissioners and, when required, the National Treatment Purchase Fund.</p> <p>An initial report on progress was submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Health in September 2016. Once all of the relevant Review recommendations have been considered, any amendments required to the Scheme will be identified.</p> <p>The Department has commenced an examination of options to bring greater national consistency to the regulation and financing of home care. This work began in 2016 with a review by the Health Research Board of how home care is regulated and funded in comparable jurisdictions, commissioned by the Department. The review will be finalised and published shortly and will be used to inform the development of policy proposals for the regulation and funding of these services. The development of a regulatory and funding model for home care services is a complex undertaking involving very significant legislative, operational and financial resources.</p>
<p>2.1.7 Progress the development and implementation of national standards for home support services, which will be subject to</p>	<p>Health</p>	<p>The Department has commenced an examination of options to bring greater national consistency to the regulation and financing of home care. This work began in 2016 with a review by the Health Research Board of how home care is regulated and funded in comparable jurisdictions, commissioned by the Department. The review will be finalised and published shortly and will be used to inform the development of policy proposals for the regulation and funding of these services. In addition, a public consultation process will be launched in the coming months to allow stakeholders, including older people, their families and healthcare workers to express their views regarding a new homecare scheme.</p>

inspection by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).		The HSE continues to include in its tendered home care arrangements, a range of quality specifications that approved providers must commit to achieving. The most recent tender arrangements commenced on 01/09/2016 and are scheduled to run until 31/08/2018
	HSE	<p>The HSE commenced a new National Tender for Enhanced Home Care Packages on 1st September 2016.</p> <p>All successful tenderers had to demonstrate that they had reached Quality Standards in order to become HSE Approved Providers. These standards support the HIQA National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare (June 2012) and are incorporated within the service agreements for all home care providers.</p> <p>The development of registration, standards and inspection of external home care providers is the responsibility of the Government.</p>
<p>Objective 2.2 Support children and young people with caring responsibilities and protect them from the adverse impacts of caring</p>		
Action	Department	Update for Sept 2015-Dec 2016
2.2.1 Raise awareness and understanding among education providers of the signs that children and young people have caring responsibilities and the impact of caring on them	DCYA	<p>Tusla Educational Welfare Services are actively providing supports to young carers through the Home School Community Liaison, Schools Completion and Education Welfare Services as appropriate.</p> <p>All schools have now been informed of their obligation to submit a School Attendance Strategy to Tusla by September 2017 in accordance with Section 22 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000. All schools are expected to clearly outline measures they will implement to support children at risk of poor attendance, participation or retention including young people with caring responsibilities. (Tusla)</p> <p>The National Youth Strategy 2015-2020 for 10 to 24 year olds was published in 2015. While it will be a universal strategy for all young people, it has a particular focus on those who have additional needs. Having regard to the needs, situation and aspirations of young carers, the Strategy commits to progressing the following actions over 2015-2017:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness and understanding among education, health and youth service providers of the signs that young people have caring responsibilities, and the impact of caring on them in relation to their education, health and recreation pursuits. • Establish a cross-sector/cross-agency working group to consider the needs of young carers and to work towards aligning supports for young carers to help ensure an integrated and coordinated response to their needs. <p>Implementing the Strategy is a shared responsibility across government departments, agencies and youth interests. The implementation structures established by DCYA for <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> will be optimised to assist and support the implementation of the Strategy.</p> <p>A National Youth Strategy Lead Team has been established in the Department to co-ordinate, progress and monitor implementation of the Strategy. The terms of reference were set out in the National Youth Strategy and the team has met a number of times since June and is developing an implementation plan on how best to pursue the cross departmental actions through the <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> structures.</p>
	Education	<p>Prior to the incorporation of the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) within Tusla, DES reported on issues relating to school attendance, retention and progression of school-age children who are carers. Since its incorporation within Tusla, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DYCA) has direct and sole responsibility in this regard.</p> <p>Well-Being Guidelines for primary and post primary schools have now been developed as a collaborative process by the Department of Education and Skills, NEPS, the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive. The guidelines provide clear information for schools and for agencies supporting schools on how to address issues of mental health promotion and are informed by the findings of current research. They present in an integrated way the existing elements of good practice which schools should have in place. The Guidelines outline how schools support young people through early intervention and prevention, modelled on the National Educational Psychological Service Continuum of Support, tiered approach and using the following structure:</p>



The Guidelines build on the significant work already taking place in schools, including through the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. The effective implementation of the SPHE curriculum provides a scaffold and framework to foster the health and well-being of all young people, including young people who may be carers, in a planned and structured way. The Professional Development Service for Teachers has produced two resources on 'Personal Safety', one for junior cycle and one for senior cycle. Both were published in 2016 and provide up-to-date advice in line with other policy developments in recent years. For example, the junior cycle booklet can be accessed at <http://www.sphe.ie/downloads/resources/Junior-Cycle-Personal-Safety-Handbook-April-2016.pdf> . Caregiving is identified as a core area relevant to personal safety, and within that it is explained that 'It should be borne in mind that some young people themselves are carers in circumstances where a parent is ill or unable to look after themselves. This should be acknowledged by the teacher'.

Thus, the guidelines are directed at both students in need of care, and who are carers themselves in certain circumstances. Subsequently, great emphasis is placed on reminding students of the support structures within the school, and to help them identify trusted adults to whom they could talk if they needed to. Details of these e.g. Childline, are provided in Appendix 3 of the booklet.

These booklets are supported by online resources, and by CPD in important aspects of the

		<p>SPHE curriculum. The recent launch (January 2017) of the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, due to be implemented in all schools from September 2017, will reinforce key SPHE messages further. The Guidelines show most clearly that such important issues are as much part of an overall wellbeing ‘package’ for students as they are for delivery in any individual subject space.</p>
<p>2.2.2 Encourage statutory agencies to review the way that they respond to children and young people with caring responsibilities</p>	<p>DCYA</p>	<p>See 2.2.1 on the National Youth Strategy.</p> <p>Some Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSC) support work with young carers. This number can increase as good practice is established and knowledge and learning exchanged across the CYPSC network. (See Action 1.1.1).</p> <p>The Child and Family Support Networks and the Meitheal Early Intervention National Practice Model are being developed by Tusla across the country to coordinate and deliver services in an integrated way to help improve outcomes for children and families with complex needs who need involvement from more than one agency. It could be effectively used with young carers to identify their needs and to provide practical support and help. Tusla is putting in place Coordinators to support agencies working with children, young people and families at local level to form into cohesive Child and Family Support Networks, to help access to services.</p> <p>Tusla fund a range of family support services in the community which young carers can access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 106 Family Resource Centres offer a range of practical support • Neighbourhood youth and Springboard programmes. • Health Cafes, drop-in & targeted facilities for children and young people. • Youth Advocacy Services e.g Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP). Extern Programme, Foróige, Barnardos. • Educational Welfare Services, including the Home School Community Liaison, School Completion Programme and Education Welfare Services operate to identify and support children at risk of not reaching their potential in the educational system due to poor attendance, participation or retention. A range of interventions are provided including breakfast and homework clubs; afterschool supports; mentoring programmes; therapeutic interventions and customised one-to-one programmes to support children at

		<p>risk of school dropout and support children who may be outside mainstream education for any reason. Ensuring that schools have in place the appropriate procedures to monitor, identify and respond to attendance, participation and retention issues. Programmes are in place to support young people transitioning from pre-school to primary school and from primary to post-primary school.</p> <p>Under the DCYA <i>Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011)</i>, there is a requirement that professionals and others working with children pay particular attention to the needs of children who may be at risk of abuse. If there are concerns about a child, or a child's welfare and safety, then the child should be referred to Tusla Child & Family Agency Social Work Department who will investigate the concern and follow-up as soon as possible. (Tusla)</p>
	Education	<p>A key priority within the 2017 Action Plan for Education is the aim of actively supporting and enhancing wellbeing within school communities to ensure that resilience and personal wellbeing are integral parts of the education and training system. Almost 40 actions are set out in the plan to improve services and resources to promote wellbeing in school communities which include making the Wellbeing programme available to all Junior Cycle students, enhanced guidance counselling in second level including the requirement that schools' guidance plans include specified time allocation for guidance counsellors to be available for one-to-one guidance counselling for students and an increase in the capacity of NEPS.</p> <p>Well-Being Guidelines for primary and post primary schools have been developed as a collaborative process by the Department of Education and Skills, NEPS, the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive. See 2.2.1 for details.</p>
2.2.3 Identify support services needed by children and young people with caring responsibilities	HSE	<p>PCT members, in particular the Public Health Nursing Service, identify children in a caring role. Where they assess that a child is burdened by their caring role PCT members will review the Client's Individual Care and Support Plan and mobilise resources in order to relieve the child of such burden. The PCT member will seek advice from their Line Manager and consider child welfare and protection issues. Where this is deemed to be a child welfare and protection issue a referral is made to TUSLA.</p>

and create mechanisms for young carers to contact service providers		The Child & Adolescence Mental Health Service (CAMHS) continued to provide services and address the number of children and adolescents on waiting lists to be seen by the Community CAMHS teams.
2.2.4 Investigate and analyse the situation of children and young people undertaking caring roles	DCYA	<p>The DCYA requested the Central Statistics Office to include a question in the Census of Population 2011 concerning carers. People of all ages were asked whether they provide any unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long term illness, health problem or disability (including old age). These census results were published by the CSO in November 2012 and were included in the publication “Our Bill of Health –Health, Disability & Carers in Ireland”. The Department published the “State of the Nation’s Children – Ireland 2014” in March 2015 and it included data on Children as Carers from the 2011 Census of Population.</p> <p>It was planned, under the National Strategy for Research and Data on Children’s Lives, published by the Department in November 2011, that an analysis of those children who reported in the 2011 Census that they undertook caring roles, would be carried out. This report was initially planned to be progressed and published in 2015 but was delayed. It is planned to publish this data report, with the final implementation report of the National Strategy for Research and Data on Children’s Lives, in 2017.</p>
National Goal 3		
Support carers to care with confidence through the provision of adequate information, training, services and supports		
Objective 3.1		
Promote the availability of user friendly and timely information and advice		
Action	Department	Update for Sept 2015-Dec 2016
3.1.1 Ensure frontline staff in key ‘first contact’ agencies such	Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	Thirty one Housing and Disability Steering Groups have been established, in each local authority administrative area. Work of the groups in 2016 was around the finalisation of their Local Strategic Plans including their cross referencing/validation with the Social Housing Needs Assessment carried out in September 2016. Many of the local authorities have presented their Strategic Plans to their Strategic Policy Committees.

<p>as local authorities, local health offices and health and personal social service providers have the correct information to be able to sign post carers to other services as appropriate</p>		
	Health	<p>A Section on Carers is available on the Department's website, with links to the Carer's Strategy and Third Annual Progress Report. There is also a link to the Family Carers Ireland website.</p>
	Social Protection	<p>Information on carers schemes, policy, guidelines and legislation are all available on the website. The forms can be ordered or downloaded from the website.</p> <p>There is a link to the Family Carers Ireland website on DSP Carers' webpage. CIB provides a network of local offices with information on carer supports.</p>
	HSE	<p>All CHOs report staff are enabled to provide information to carers through presentations by Family Carers Ireland, staff training, team meetings and sharing of local knowledge of supports and services.</p> <p>The HSE launched a dedicated Carers Webpage on the HSE website in June 2016. The site provides comprehensive information on health services and other relevant information for carers. www.hse.ie/carers</p> <p>The HSE provides an Infoline (1850 24 1850) or via email hselive@hse.ie - for questions about health services, entitlements, or how to access HSE health or social services in local</p>

		<p>areas or to make a complaint or comment on HSE services</p> <p>Understand Together launched on Oct 24th 2016 is a national public awareness and information campaign aimed at inspiring people from all sections of society to stand together with half a million Irish people whose families have been touched by dementia. It is one strand of the National Dementia Strategy Implementation Programme focussed on addressing low levels of awareness about dementia and helping to create supportive and inclusive communities for people with dementia and their loved ones. The aim is to help create an Ireland that embraces and includes people living with dementia, and which displays understanding, empathy and solidarity with them and their loved ones. Understand Together is funded by the HSE and the Atlantic Philanthropies.</p> <p>The campaign is led by the HSE working with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Genio. Other key partners include DCU Elevator, Hello Brain and DSIDC. It has garnered support from over 30 partners from the health, education, public service, business, voluntary and community sectors (for a list of partners see http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/dementia/About-Understand-Together/partners/).</p> <p>A solid evidence base to support the campaign was gathered including qualitative and quantitative research at a national level as well as focus groups with people living with dementia and carers and groups living in long-term care.</p> <p>The Coping Skills for Carers Programme is available free on www.dementiaelevator.ie. The programme was developed as part of the HSE/DCU National Dementia Education Programme and is to help Carers develop skills to help understand and support the person with dementia in their everyday life and assist carers to understand better their emotions and feeling on their dementia journey.</p> <p>The Your Mental Health Website facilitated by HSE Communications provides information for all – and specifically if users search for ‘carers’ there are 10 results, such as ‘Mental Health law and rights’, ‘Information needs of carers’, ‘Financial Supports for carers’, ‘Caring for the carer’ and others.</p>
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		http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie/
3.1.2 Review material (paper and Internet based) available to carers and investigate (in conjunction with carer's representative organisations) how more comprehensive information materials dedicated to carers' needs can be developed and distributed to service providers likely to be a carer's first point of contact	Social Protection	<p>Carers' Week was highlighted with a Banner Headline on the DSP Website.</p> <p>A link to the Family Carers Ireland website is now included on the DSP website.</p> <p>A link to the Carers' Strategy is now included on the DSP website.</p> <p>The review of the CR1 is still in progress.</p> <p>Advice is sought from Carers Groups and the National Adult Literacy Agency.</p> <p>DSP are also in the process of updating the Carer's Allowance and Benefit operational guidelines on the Department's website as well as the general Carer's Allowance and Benefit website content to ensure accuracy, clarity and completeness.</p> <p>A video was added to the home page of the welfare.ie website in 2015. It explains how to navigate or move around the website with scrolling text, sign language, sound and screenshots so is accessible for people with visual difficulties, those that are deaf or hard of hearing, and people with literacy difficulties.</p>
	HSE	This Action was completed in 2016. See response to 3.1.1
3.1.3 Ensure that the information needs of sub-groups of carers, such as older	Health	A Section on Carers is available on the Department's website, with links to the Carer's Strategy and Third Annual Progress Report. There is also a link to the Family Carers Ireland website.

<p>carers, children and young people with caring responsibilities, carers in rural areas are addressed</p>		
	<p>Social Protection</p>	<p>Information on the website can be made available on request in different formats including braille and translated to different languages.</p> <p>A link to the Family Carers Ireland website now exists on the Department's website which provides details of local supports and services available to carers as promoted by the Family Carers Ireland website.</p> <p>DSP provided administrative assistance to research conducted by UCD/UU/FCI on Family Carers' Experiences of Caring for a Person with Intellectual Disability</p>
	<p>HSE</p>	<p>The information needs of carers living in rural areas are addressed through a number of ways, sometimes service specific, for example child disability teams who support families.</p> <p>In the main, information is provided through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSE Helpline • HSE Website including dedicated Carers page • Primary Care teams • Public Health Nursing service • Network Specialist Teams • Health Area Specialist Teams • Care & Support planning process • Referral to the Family Carers Ireland and other relevant support organisations • Carer support groups • Presentations and workshops

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Training Courses • Meetings with families. <p>See response to 3.1.1 & 3.1.2</p>
	DCYA	<p>The DCYA website includes a link to the National Carers' Strategy, the third Annual Progress Report and a link to the Family Carers Ireland dedicated Young Carer page (www.youngcarers.ie).</p> <p>The National Youth Strategy (see 2.2.1 above) also commits to a number of cross-cutting 'enabling actions' to be led by the DCYA. This includes the following actions relating to information needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to quality information through various media for young people, parents and families. • Review existing youth information provision and support in the context of achieving the five national outcomes for young people.
	Education	<p>NEPS has produced an information leaflet for all children and young people on the NEPS service, with a view to ensuring a pupil participation approach in the NEPS service.</p> <p>Arising from the commitments set out in the Action Plan for Education 2017 and the allocation of additional guidance resources from September 2017, schools' guidance plans will be required to include specified time allocation for guidance counsellors to be available for one to one guidance counselling for students.</p> <p>The NCSE is finalising a new booklet for parents and carers on the implementation of the new model for resource teachers which will be published shortly</p> <p>If, subject to content, the relevant stakeholder groups have produced particular resources to address and support the information needs of carers and in particular, young people with caring responsibilities, the Department of Education and Skills would be willing to disseminate these through its usual links with schools.</p>
	Justice	<p>The new National Disability Inclusion Strategy will be published shortly (see Section 1.1.2). The Strategy identifies a number of actions concerning the provision of, and enhancing the availability of information to, persons who are caring for persons with disabilities.</p>

<p>3.1.4 Proactively collate and disseminate information about services and supports available at a local level for carers</p>	<p>HSE</p>	<p>Information about services and supports that are available to carers at a local level is collated and disseminated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Care teams including the Public Health Nursing service • Network Specialist Teams • Health Area Specialist Teams • Carer Support Groups • Carer Training courses provided by the HSE or by Carer Support Groups • Health Centres • HSE Helpline • HSE Website including dedicated Carers page.
	<p>Social Protection</p>	<p>There is a link to the Family Carers Ireland website on DSP Carers' webpage. CIB provides a network of local offices with information on carer supports.</p> <p>The 2014 DSP Dormant Accounts Action Plan provided funding to 16 projects to provide information and supports to family carers. The DSP measure specific guidelines included a focus on projects providing information on local supports.</p>
<p>Objective 3.2 Provide relevant and accessible carer training opportunities for carers</p>		
<p>Action</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>Update for Sept 2015-Dec 2016</p>
<p>3.2.1 Identify gaps in the content of current training programmes for carers (in conjunction with carer's representative organisations)</p>	<p>Education</p>	<p>Since 2014, all ETBs engage in an annual FET service planning process involving a range of detailed parameters set by SOLAS, so as plan provision that will address and serve the skill needs of those it serves. This process results in the annual publication of the FET Services plan. The process has been refined and improved each year and includes the use of strengthened labour market data provided by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit to ensure the skill needs of learners and enterprise, on a regional and national basis, are addressed and provided for.</p> <p>Within the FET Sector there is a broad range of high quality flexible provision available each year to provide skills training for a range of sectors, including the caring sector leading to awards from levels 1 to 6 of the NFQ.</p>

		<p>All programmes are delivered through the network of 16 Education and Training Boards and are provided on both full and part-time basis in a wide range of venues including second-level Community Schools, Further Education Colleges, Youthreach and Adult Education Centres and Training Centres.</p> <p>In 2016, training provision for the caring sector (excluding child care) was provided to almost 12,000 beneficiaries and including child care to over 16,000 beneficiaries.</p> <p>In September last year, officials from the Department met with FCI and had a very positive engagement in relation to the strategy and provision for the sector.</p> <p>As part of the 2017 SOLAS/ETB business consider how training needs identified by carer organisations can be addressed.</p>
	HSE	All CHOs report a range of training programmes delivered directly by the HSE, jointly with carers' representative organisations or directly by carers' representative organisations covering a range of topics.
3.2.2 Enhance the accessibility of education and training courses through the use of face-to face, on-line and distance learning options	Education	SOLAS/ETBI published the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Strategy in 2016. Implementation will support increased capacity for flexibility and access to FET provision which will include enhanced Online and Blended Learning approaches supporting the individual needs of learners, including carers for greater flexibility in delivery and access.
	HSE	<p>Across the country training courses are delivered in the local community to family carers by Family Carers Ireland and the HSE. Courses are mostly delivered through group work and one to one training where appropriate.</p> <p>Refer to 3.2.1</p>

Objective 3.3		
Promote the development of accessible living environments for all		
Action	Department	Update for Sept 2015-Dec 2016
3.3.1 Prioritise funding for the operation of the suite of housing grants for older people and people with a disability and ensure that they can be accessed by families in a timely way	Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	<p>The value and social benefit of these grants have been recognised in the new Housing Action Plan, <i>Rebuilding Ireland</i>, specifically the importance of supporting older people and people with a disability to continue living independently in their own homes and also to facilitate early return from hospital stays. The Housing Action Plan commits to increasing the support available under the scheme to target up to 10,000 homes in 2017 (up from 8,000 in 2016) and to also streamlining the application process.</p> <p>The funding available for these grants has increased steadily over the last few years. The available exchequer funding of €45m in 2016 was an increase of 10% on the 2015 figure. Combined with the local authority contribution, the overall funding available was €56.25m. A combined total of over €48m was paid to applicants in 2016 i.r.o. 8,010 grants. It is expected that funding will increase again in 2017 to enable the delivery of the target of 10,000 grants.</p>
3.3.2 Identify good practice in implementing assistive technology and ambient assistive living technology to support independent living and telehealth opportunities	HSE	<p>Primary Care Physiotherapists / Occupational Therapists and Nursing personnel are involved in the assessment and provision of equipment and assistive technologies; however budgetary limitations exist for the provision of such technologies.</p> <p>See response to 2.1.4</p>
	Housing, Planning,	Review commencing of good practice models in service and housing provision and this is one of the areas that will be examined. It is expected to have the review completed by the end of

	Community and Local Government	2017.
3.3.3 Review and up-date Transport Sectoral Plan under Disability Act 2005	Transport	Department of Tourism Transport and Sport proposes to undertake a review in 2017 of the actions under its current Sectoral Plan. Family Carers Ireland will be given an opportunity to comment on this review.
National Goal 4		
Empower carers to participate as fully as possible in economic and social life		
Objective 4.1		
Enable carers to have respite breaks		
Action	Department	Update for Sept 2015-Dec 2016
4.1.1 Promote a better awareness of the existence of the Respite Care Grant	Social Protection	<p>The Carer's Support Grant (formerly known as the Respite Care Grant) is advertised via a banner on the DSP Carer Webpage and on the main page during and in the weeks leading up to Carers' Week.</p> <p>Applicants who are disallowed on grounds other than medical continue to be advised that they may have an entitlement to the Carer's Support Grant. The award letter has also been changed to include the line about Carer's Allowance being a taxable source of income in the main body of the award letter.</p>
4.1.2 Promote a range of person-centred and flexible respite options	HSE	<p>The HSE recognises the importance of flexible responsive respite services as part of the overall care package for individuals and their carers.</p> <p>Information on respite services is provided through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Care Teams • Public Health Nursing Service • Network Specialist Teams and Services • Health Area Specialist Teams and Services

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Help / Home Care Package Managers • Carer Support Groups • Carer Organisations • Training courses for carers <p>Respite service needs are addressed on an individualised case by case basis and can include planned and emergency respite care options in the home, community and residential settings including services provided by non-statutory organisations.</p> <p>The respite service is not a demand led scheme and the HSE must deliver services within budget.</p>
4.1.3 Identify gaps in existing services and establish performance indicators for the provision of respite services	HSE	<p>The HSE established a Respite Review group to achieve this action.</p> <p>The HSE Respite Review Group terms of reference are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define what Respite means to all stakeholders; • Establish the levels of respite services provided; • Consider future performance indicators for the service. <p>The Respite Review group held a focus group meeting in December 2016 with Family Carers Ireland to seek their views on the respite service.</p> <p>Further Focus groups are planned for 2017.</p>
Objective 4.2		
Enable carers to remain in touch with the labour market to the greatest extent possible		
Action	Department	Update for Sept 2015-Dec 2016
4.2.1 Promote existing carer friendly HR policies within Government	Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government	Ongoing action

Departments and Agencies		
	Education	DES continues to facilitate staff who wish to avail of carers leave in order to care for a family member in need of such care. We also advise staff of the most appropriate or advantageous form of leave to take depending on the individual circumstances of each case (HR)
	Health	Staff in the Department of Health can obtain information on, and apply for, Carers' leave, through the PeoplePoint shared HR service for the Civil Service.
	Justice	<p>All applications for Carer's leave are handled in accordance with the Carers Leave Act 2001 and Department of Finance Circular 39/2005. Since 15 April 2013 applications are processed by PeoplePoint in consultation with this Department's HR Division. Every consideration is given to applications from staff members to allow them to take temporary unpaid leave to provide full time care and attention for a person who is in need of such care.</p> <p>During the period September 2015 to December 2016, 10 staff in the Department availed of Carer's leave.</p>
	DCYA	<p>The DCYA operates family friendly policies such as flexi time (for specific grades), reduced working week, shorter working year, unpaid domestic leave, carers' leave and career breaks for staff in order to facilitate carers in so far as possible. Information (and application forms) on all non-annual leave, including carers' leave, is available to DCYA staff on the PeoplePoint Portal (the Civil Service HR shared service).</p> <p>Family friendly policies in Tusla include flexi-time and shorter working time, facilitated where feasible by management. (Tusla)</p>
	Social Protection	The Department of Social Protection supports and facilitates its staff in availing of carers leave and other related entitlements.
	Jobs	<p>Carers' leave is one element of a range of family friendly work life balance measures promoted by the Department and its agencies to their staff.</p> <p>In terms of the broader workforce, (ie beyond the public service), as stated above policy responsibility for the Carer's Leave Act transferred in 2015 from the Minister for Jobs,</p>

		<p>Enterprise and Innovation to the Minister for Justice and Equality (DJE) in line with proposals to consolidate all family friendly leave into a single statute under DJE.</p> <p>However, DJEI, through the information and support services for employees and employers available at the WRC (www.workplacerelations.ie) provides information to employers and employees regarding all employment rights including the Carers Leave Act of 2001 and continues to encourage employers and employees to provide flexible workplaces that meet the needs of both employers and employees.</p> <p>The Protection of Employees Part Time Work Act 2001 also facilitates work life balance measures as its key purpose was to improve the quality of part-time work and aimed to facilitate the development of part time work on a voluntary basis and contribute to the flexible organisation of working time which takes into account the needs of workers and employers. The Labour Relations Commission (now WRC) in consultation with the Social Partners prepared a Code of Practice on Access to Part Time Work which was implemented in 2006. This Code of Practice seeks to encourage best practice and promote the development of HR policies and procedures to assist employers and employees to improve access to part time work for those employees who wish to work on a part time basis and to address any barriers that may exist.</p>
4.2.2 Promote awareness of the Carer's Leave Act 2001	HSE	<p>The HSE operates family friendly policies such as flexi time (for specific grades), reduced working week, shorter working year, unpaid leave and career breaks for staff in order to facilitate carers in so far as possible. (Terms and Conditions of Employment). Details are available on the HSE website, intranet or from the HR department.</p>
	DCYA	<p>The DCYA's staff handbook, which is available to all staff on its intranet, links to <i>Circular 39/05 Carer's Leave</i> which sets out the arrangements for Carer's Leave.</p> <p>The draft Tusla staff handbook references the Carers Leave Act 2001 with information regarding carers leave and how to apply for it. An awareness campaign is planned for 2017 when launching the new staff handbook. (Tusla)</p>
	Jobs	See 4.2.1 above
	Justice	Policy responsibility for the Carer's leave Act 2001 transferred from the Minister for Jobs,

		<p>Enterprise and Innovation to the Minister for Justice and Equality with effect from 1 October 2015.</p> <p>The transfer was given effect in the Workplace Relations Act 2015 and was in line with proposals to consolidate all family leave in a single statute, under the remit of the Department of Justice and Equality.</p> <p>The Government has approved the drafting of the Family Leave Bill 2017, which will consolidate all existing family leave legislation, including carer's leave, into one Act, and work is due to commence in 2017</p>
<p>4.2.3 Encourage work-life balance provisions that are needed to ensure that working arrangements are carer friendly</p>		
<p>4.2.4 Explore how back-to-work and education training courses can be tailored to the needs of carers who wish to return to the workplace</p>	<p>Education</p>	<p>Within the FET Sector there is a broad range of flexible high quality programmes available to support the skill needs of all learners, including carers and former carers, offering opportunities to reskill and upskill that can lead to awards at levels 1-6 of the NFQ. All programmes are delivered through the network of 16 Education and Training Boards and are made available in a wide range of venues including second-level Community Schools, Further Education Colleges, Youthreach and Adult Education Centres and Training Centres.</p> <p>In the context of implementing the Goal of Active Inclusion (enabling all citizens to participate in Further Education and Training) under the FET Strategy, Solas has commissioned a</p>

		<p>research project to look at the barriers to participation in FET. As part of this process a comprehensive consultation process invited contributions from a diverse range of stakeholders groups which included an invitation to carer stakeholder groups to participate and contribute to the process. The research is scheduled for publication in Q1 2017.</p> <p>Since 2014, all ETBs engage in an annual FET service planning process involving a range of detailed parameters set by SOLAS, to plan provision that will address and serve the skill needs of those it serves. This process results in the annual publication of the FET Services plan. The process has been refined and improved each year and includes the use of strengthened labour market data provided by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit to ensure the skill needs of learners and enterprise, on a regional and national basis, are addressed and provided for.</p> <p>The restructuring and consolidation of the further education and training sector and the reduction in the number of ETBs has made it an easier system for people of all ages to navigate. With the launch of the new FET website in 2016, www.fetchcourses.ie information is now available to all prospective learners on almost 5,000 FET programmes being provided throughout the country (part time, full time and online) making FET easier and more accessible to all learners.</p>
	Social Protection	Carers can currently work or engage in education or training for an aggregate of 15 hours per week or less.
4.2.5 Review access by family carers to labour market activation measures	Social Protection	<p>Intreo currently provide advice and information on activation measures. Carers who sign on the live register are included in Group engagement and one to one planning sessions. Pathways to Work 2017 includes an action to consider options to allow recipients of carers' allowance to access activation services at the end of their caring role.</p> <p>Budget 2017 provided that from January 2017, Carer's Allowance will continue to be paid for 12 weeks where the care recipient is permanently admitted to a hospital/nursing home. Working age carers will be advised that Intreo case officers are available to support carers in developing a personal progression plan following the end of their full-time caring role.</p>

