



SECTION SIX:

Family Carers Ireland Supports

Family Carers Ireland

Family Carers Ireland is the national charity dedicated to supporting Ireland's 355,000+ family carers and to ensuring they are properly recognised, supported and empowered. Our focus as an organisation is on family carers, as we are the charity that asks the carer how they are. Whether you are looking after a young child or an adult with an intellectual or physical disability, a spouse with palliative care needs, an ageing parent or a loved one with a mental health condition, Family Carers Ireland is here to help you develop and maintain a sustainable caring routine and to ensure that we inform policy and public debate surrounding family caring. We understand that as rewarding a role as family caring can be, it can also sometimes be a struggle and when you need our help, we are standing by to support you. We believe that no one should have to care alone.

The range of supports and service we can offer you are outlined briefly below. For more information on any of our supports, please visit our website at www.familycarers.ie or contact our Freephone Careline on 1800 24 07 24.

Membership – join Family Carers Ireland

Your involvement counts. Carers' strength comes from unity in numbers. The bigger our carer community grows, the stronger your voice becomes through Family Carers Ireland on issues directly related to the care you give in the home.

As a Family Carers Ireland member, you can avail of 100+ excellent discounts and offers that we have negotiated for family carers. Further information is available on our website www.familycarers.ie. Our membership card also has an 'in case of an emergency' contact displayed on the card, so should anything happen to you outside the home (i.e. you fall or have an accident), it means that someone realises from your membership card that you are a family carer and can in turn get in touch with your emergency contact.

Other exclusive benefits include receipt of our newsletter, accessing a member only subsidy for our National Respite Weekend as well as an option to be nominated for appointment as a board member to FCI. Joining is simple! You can become a member online by visiting www.familycarers.ie or you can request an application form from our Careline or your local Support Centre.

National Freephone Careline 1800 24 07 24

Family Carers Ireland offer a free, confidential Careline service to family carers around the country. Our experienced staff and trained volunteers listen without judgment to the concerns of callers and offer practical information on a wide range of topics. These include Family Carers Ireland supports and services (e.g. membership, contact information for local Support Centres, respite, training and education, counselling, emergency care plans, rights and entitlements, personal alarms, support groups, information on Carer's Allowance and Carer's Benefit) and signposting to supports available from Local Authorities, the Health Service Executive and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

The Careline is open from 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 12pm on Saturday. Since 2016, we have partnered with the Samaritans who take calls outside of these hours to ensure family carers can speak to someone 24/7. The Careline number is 1800 24 07 24.

Carer Support Managers

Our network of Carer Support Managers are available to meet one-to-one with a family carer in any one of our 22 centres around the country. Carer Support Managers can support you with specific queries relating to your caring role, advocate on your behalf, or carry out an individual carer well-being assessment to help identify supports you may need to maintain your well-being as a carer and develop a sustainable caring routine.

Carer Well-being Review

If you would like to take part in a well-being review, you will have a chance to talk about how you are doing in 7 different areas of your life as outlined on the Carers Star™.

These areas cover: Time for yourself; your caring role; life at home; work; finances; how you feel and health.

Based on this discussion, you and your Carer Support Manager will agree an action plan, designed to support you to develop a sustainable care routine, and to improve your overall wellbeing. It's really important when you talk with the Carer Support Manager, you are as honest as possible, so that the actions agreed will really make a difference to you as a family carer.

Carer Support Groups

Family Carers Ireland currently run Carer Support Groups from our centres around the country. Carer Support Groups allow carers to share their experiences, feelings, ideas, concerns, information and problems; have a sense of connection with other family carers in similar circumstances; learn from other carers; socialise and have a break from their caring role.

Carers can share coping strategies and local information as well as offer emotional support in a safe, non-judgemental space through these support groups. Some groups bring together carers with similar experiences, for example carers of children with special needs, so that members can discuss issues specifically related to their caring situations. Other groups might focus on a shared activity. All groups provide a welcoming space for carers to meet, share support and develop enduring friendships.

Education and Training Opportunities

Family Carers Ireland provides a range of accredited and non-accredited education and training programmes and workshops to provide family carers with practical care skills and knowledge and the tools and techniques of self-care to support the development of a sustainable caring routine.

We work to constantly identify carers' education and information needs and work in partnership with many statutory, voluntary and community organisations to meet those needs.

Counselling

Many carers find positive meaning in their caring role and with the right supports carers can flourish. However, inconsistent and irregular support combined with the demands of the caring role can have a major negative impact on the emotional well-being and mental health of a family carer.

Family Carers Ireland can offer access to counselling free of charge for carers in need of this type of support. The counselling service can be accessed through speaking to one of our Carer Support Managers. Call into your local centre or phone the Careline on 1800 24 07 24 to find out more.

Emergency Card Scheme

One of the biggest worries for family carers is what will happen to the person they care for if they are in an accident or suddenly take ill. The Family Carers Ireland FREE Emergency Scheme can put your mind at rest with access to a 24/7 emergency helpline. Joining the scheme will ensure that the person you care for will continue to receive the support they need during a time of crisis from people you trust.

You can get your plan and join the scheme by e-mailing emergencyscheme@familycarers.ie, visiting www.familycarers.ie or by calling the Freephone Careline on 1800 24 07 24.

Family Carers Ireland Website

Our website – www.familycarers.ie – is a hub of information on all of the supports and services offered by Family Carers Ireland across the country. You can find details of your local support centre; social events, workshops and carer groups in your area; home support services; our current campaigns and lobbying activities; sign up to become a member and view your membership benefits, discounts and offers; and seek support and advice through an online chat tool supported by the Careline.

Family Carers Ireland App

The Family Carers Ireland App is free to download on the Google Play Store (Android) and App Store (Apple) or accessible on your PC/laptop through our website. It includes an essential care planning hub which allows you to create a profile of the cared-for person; coordinate care with family and friends; keep track of medications and appointments and a community section where you can connect and chat with other family carers.

Homecare Services

Family Carers Ireland is a HSE approved Home Care Provider. Our focus has always been on providing a personalised quality reliable home care service that responds to changing needs with comprehensive, premium quality supports. We pride ourselves in the knowledge that we understand your needs and are truly committed to ensuring you are safe, comfortable and cared for to the highest of standards. Our care plans can include any combination of a general call-in service, light housekeeping, social activities, personal care and more

specialised support, e.g. dementia or palliative care. Please call us on 1800 929 020 for more information.

Respite

Family Carers Ireland also provide respite services. Similar to the homecare services we provide, respite can include any combination of a general call-in service, light housekeeping, social activities, personal care and more specialised support, e.g. dementia or palliative care. Respite support takes into account both the needs of the carer and the cared for person and is provided in such a way as to ensure the carer is able to maximise the respite offered from a care worker coming into the home. Respite is often provided in blocks of 2+ hours and the carer is encouraged to use this time to take a break from their caring role.

Campaigns, Lobbying & Advocacy

Part of our work in Family Carers Ireland is to work with carers to ensure their issues are brought to the attention of Government and policy makers. We deliver a range of campaigns to raise awareness of carers and advance policy and we advocate for carers by offering practical advice, information and emotional support. Our policy and campaigning efforts are grounded in the reality of carers' experiences, backed up with evidence through our programme of research. In our media campaigns, we support carers to tell their stories in order to help other carers and improve public understanding of how caring affects people's lives.

Young Carers

Young carers are children or young people who help to care for somebody in their family with an illness, a disability, a mental health issue or an alcohol or other drug problem. A young carer may help care for a parent, a sibling, a grandparent or even other relatives. If you are a young carer, there are lots of ways that Family Carers Ireland can help you. For information on any of the following supports, contact our Young Carers Office on 057 9370208 or youngcarers@familycarers.ie

- Individual and Family Support

Individual support is available to young carers and young adult carers struggling with any aspect of their caring role. We offer information, advocacy, advice, practical supports, counselling and emergency planning. We can also offer help to the wider family through our network partners and local Family Carers Ireland Centres.

- Young Carer Support Network

Family Carers Ireland has a network of local young carer supports in several locations across the country. These services offer supports such as young carer groups, information, advice and practical supports.

- Free Young Carer Card

Family Carers Ireland offers a free Young Carer Card which gives young carers aged 10-24 access to a variety of deals and discounts. There are currently over 20 deals and discounts available to young carers including offers from Carlingford Adventure Centre, Zipit Forest Adventure, Grafton Barbers, Omniplex Cinemas, Gym Plus, The Body Shop and many more. The card can also be used as disclosure tool for schools, colleges and health services.

Young Carer Card holders will also receive regular updates about upcoming events and activities. To apply for a Young Carer Card, visit www.familycarers.ie and fill in the online form.

- National Events

At Family Carers Ireland, we recognise the importance of peer support, networking and respite breaks for young carers. Our annual Young Carer Respite Weekend gives young carers aged 12-17 a break from their caring roles and an opportunity to meet with other young carers while taking part in fun activities. We also organise regular conferences and forums which give young carers the opportunity to have their voices heard.

- Young Carers in Education

Family Carers Ireland's Young Carers in School Programme works with schools across the country to support students with caring responsibilities. We have a guide for teachers and other school staff to help ensure that they understand the issues affecting young carers and how to meet their needs. We also offer awareness talks and support schools to set up in-school young carer groups.

Our supports for young adult carers in further and higher education include information, advocacy, help with accessing financial support (such as the SUSI Grant) and emergency care planning. We also have a network of colleges and third level institutions who have put in place structures to make further and higher education more accessible to young carers.