



The National Carers' Strategy  
*Recognised, Supported, Empowered*

Third Progress Report  
September 2014 – September 2015

Tús Áite do  
Shábháilteacht **1** Othar  
Patient Safety **1** First

## 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 third Progress Report on implementation for the period September 2014– September 2015.

<b>National Goal 1</b>		
<b>Recognise the value and contribution of carers and promote their inclusion in decisions relating to the person that they caring for</b>		
<b>Objective 1.1</b>		
<b>Strengthen awareness and recognition of the role and contribution of carers at national, regional and local level</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Update for Sept 2014-Sept 2015</b>
1.1.1 Promote a better recognition of the role and contribution of carers at a national level	<b>Environment</b>	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-2014 to mid-2016. Further details are available at: <a href="http://www.environ.ie/en/Community/CommunityVoluntarySupports/SchemetoSupportNationalOrganisations/">http://www.environ.ie/en/Community/CommunityVoluntarySupports/SchemetoSupportNationalOrganisations/</a>
	<b>Education</b>	The NCSE continues to consult with parents of special needs children as part of its National Consultative Forum.
	<b>Health</b>	Work is on-going on the policy proposals to be brought to Government for a new Transport Support Scheme. 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. Heads of Bill have now been developed in draft form and are currently subject to detailed legal examination. The Health (Transport Support) Bill is included in the Government Legislation Programme.
	<b>Social Protection</b>	The Department continues to provide annual reports on "Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services" including information relating to illness, disability and caring.
	<b>HSE</b>	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.  The HSE established a Multi Divisional Carer Strategy group in early 2015. This group will assist

		<p>the HSE across the divisions to progress the actions in the Carers' Strategy.</p> <p>All Divisions continue to support the Community Health Organisations (CHOs) in promoting a better recognition of the role and contribution of carers.</p> <p>The role and contribution of carers will be promoted as an integral part of the plan for Acute services on "Promoting a Culture of Patient Partnership within Acute Services". The HSE is piloting a national feedback system in three locations; the results of the pilot will inform the implementation of a national programme which will enable the measurement of patient experience and also capture carer feedback.</p> <p>The HSE Mental Health Division established an Office of the Head of Service User Family Member &amp; Carer Engagement in 2014.</p>
	<b>DCYA</b>	<p>Children Services Committees have been renamed since September 2014 to Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC). It is intended to have full national coverage of CYPSC and a co-ordinator in each.</p>
<p><b>1.1.2</b> 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</p>	<b>Environment</b>	<p>The requirement for appropriate consultation and input with carers and representative organisations will be underpinned in the context of the future development of policies for vulnerable groups and the implementation of current policies in respect of people with disabilities and older people.</p>

Ageing Strategy and the Children and Young People's Policy Framework 2012-2017 (forthcoming)		
	<b>Education</b>	The NCSE continues to engage with groups of stakeholders in the development of its policy advice.
	<b>Health</b>	<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. This Framework 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. The Reference Group to devise a national participation framework for service users has been established. Carers will be considered in the course of all work undertaken by this Working Group.</p> <p>The Carers Association was among the organisations invited to attend the "Health Consultation Event 2015" hosted by the Minister for Health in Dublin Castle in September.</p> <p>The National Dementia Strategy emphasises the need to support people with dementia and their carers. The Dementia Strategy Monitoring Group includes a representative of carers for people with dementia.</p>
	<b>Social Protection</b>	The DSP regularly engages with groups representing Carers. Carers' representative groups attended the DSP pre-budget forum in 2015. 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>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>
	<b>Justice</b>	<p>The Dept of Justice and Equality in conjunction with the National Disability Authority and the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group launched a public consultation in June 2015 for a new National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2016-2019 inviting interested parties, including carers, to make submissions on key themes for inclusion in the plan. Separately, a Disability Awareness Funding Programme launched by the Department in July 2015 aims to raise awareness 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) Bill 2013 proposes a modern statutory framework to support decision-making by adults who have difficulty in making decisions without help. It will repeal the Marriage of Lunatics Act 1811 and cause the Lunacy Regulation (Ireland) Act 1871 to cease to have effect.</p>
	<b>HSE</b>	<p>The HSE meets 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 for example;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabilities services</li> <li>• Acute hospitals services</li> <li>• Representative groups and service users</li> </ul> <p>The role of carers is included and outlined in the National Healthcare Charters for adults and children.</p>
	<b>DCYA</b>	<p><i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020</i> was launched in April 2014. 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,</p>

		<p>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 Parenting Support Strategy has been developed and published. A Parent Participation Toolkit has been developed and consultation is underway. <i>Parenting 24/7</i> was launched and is available on <a href="http://www.tusla.ie">www.tusla.ie</a>. A training manual is being developed to support this. A conference is planned for December 2015. (TUSLA)</p>
<b>1.1.3</b> Build on the work begun in Census 2011 to establish a comprehensive statistical profile of Family Caring in Ireland	<b>DCYA</b>	It is planned to have another Census of Population in April 2016. This Census will include the question again using exactly the same wording in order to allow the data from 2011 to be trended forward.
<b>1.1.4</b> Continue to convene an annual carers forum to provide carers with a voice at policy level	<b>Social Protection</b>	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 and Equality, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. In 2014, following consultation with Carers' representative groups the relevant 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.
<b>1.1.5</b> Support	<b>Health</b>	Carer organisations have received support through National Lottery Grants awarded by the Minister

national organisations representing the interests of carers		for Health
	<b>Social Protection</b>	The Dormant Accounts Plan includes 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. Pobal is responsible for the administration of the measure and following a series of information meetings held in June 2015, are evaluating applications received. The evaluation process and the award of contracts to successful applicants will be completed by the end of 2015.
	<b>HSE</b>	<p>The HSE established a HSE Multi Divisional Carer Strategy group in early 2015. This group will assist the HSE across the divisions to progress the actions in the Carer Strategy. The group met with the Carers Association and Care Alliance to ascertain their priorities and their expectations of actions to implement the Carers' Strategy within the remit of the HSE.</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"> <li>• Section 39</li> <li>• National Lottery</li> <li>• Carers Week</li> </ul>
1.1.6 Promote more proactive approaches to the identification of carers and to addressing	<b>Education</b>	The NCSE has published a number of information booklets for parents and guardians of children with special educational needs, including Choosing a School; Post Primary and Training' the SNA Scheme and a number of information booklets on the different categories of disability.



<p>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><b>HSE</b></p>	<p>The HSE has committed to developing a specific Carer Needs Assessment in 2015 as part of the Inter RAI Single Assessment Tool, for testing in 2016 and national and international implementation in 2017. The Carers' Needs Assessment will be developed in Ireland and then rolled out for international use in over 30 countries currently using Inter RAI tools.</p> <p>A Carers Needs Assessment Working Group was established comprising members of the HSE national SAT project team, representatives from carers' and voluntary organisations along with</p>

		<p>international members of the Inter RAI Instrument and System Development committee. Meetings and workshops were held and a draft Carers' Needs Assessment has been produced. A scoping exercise to test this draft is planned for Q3-Q4 2015.</p> <p>All CHOs report proactive responses to support this action through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership working and grant aiding relevant stakeholders to support identification of carers.</li> <li>• Primary Care Teams, Public Health Nursing, individual disciplines identifying and supporting individual carers in their day to day work.</li> <li>• Information sharing at Clinical Team Meetings and/or case discussions/Family Meetings.</li> <li>• Carer involvement in care planning for the service user (with consent from service user) taking into account the carer and family situation.</li> <li>• Advising carers on entitlements, local support groups, and support services (including respite services) available.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1.1.7 Promote carer self-identification initiatives and encourage carers to formally identify themselves to service providers</b></p>	<p><b>HSE</b></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"> <li>• Primary care teams including the public health nursing service are pivotal in supporting carers to self identify.</li> <li>• Network Specialists Teams and Services, e.g. Children's Disability Teams</li> <li>• Health Area Specialist Teams and Services, e.g Home Care Package Co-ordinators / managers</li> <li>• Development of care &amp; support plans</li> <li>• Carer Support groups</li> <li>• Alzheimer cafes</li> <li>• Training courses for carers</li> <li>• Working in partnership with the Carers Association and other relevant organisations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objective 1.2</b></p>		

<b>Include carers in care planning and decision making for those that they care for</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Update for Sept 2014-Sept 2015</b>
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	HSE	<p>The HSE acknowledges the importance of a partnership approach to care planning and provision. 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. 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>All CHOs report that carers are involved in care planning where appropriate and with the client's permission.</p> <p>Under Article 15 of the Mental Health Act, Individual Care Plans are a requirement for in-patient units to achieve regulatory compliance and this is monitored by the Mental Health Division.</p> <p>Medi-stori, a resource designed for Patients and carers to help self-manage their medication is being funded and piloted across Temple Street, Tallaght and Mayo Hospitals and a number of charities and is endorsed by the Carers Association.</p>
1.2.2 Identify carers and their involvement in discharge planning, including their details provided in discharge	HSE	<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>In accordance with the Mental Health Commission requirements, each approved centre must have individual care plans which include a discharge planning process with carers involved as appropriate.</p> <p>Details provided in discharge letters to GPs can only be provided in line with the National Policy on</p>

letters to GPs		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.
<b>Objective 1.3</b>		
<b>Recognise the needs of carers by the provision of income supports</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Update for Sept 2014-Sept 2015</b>
1.3.1 Provide regular benefits advice sessions and information through the application process	<b>Social Protection</b>	<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 carers' benefit, carers' allowance and the respite care grant, is published for each scheme.</p> <p>Information Section hosted presentations to customer representation groups in June 2015. Carers Policy section made a presentation on Carers policy, schemes and legislation.</p> <p>Information on the website can be made available on request in different formats including braille and translated into different languages.</p> <p>Applicants who are disallowed on grounds other than medical are now advised that they may have an entitlement to the Respite Care 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>Using the learning/recommendations from the Domiciliary Care Scheme Review, the process of reviewing the entitlement of applicants whose care recipient(s) are exiting the domiciliary care allowance scheme has been changed and streamlined to provide further information to applicants and to provide them with the maximum opportunity to furnish all relevant evidence for review before any decision is made by the Department on continued eligibility. Applicants are notified further in advance of the child's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and the letter contains enhanced information. In addition, before a deciding officer makes a decision to discontinue a CA payment, s/he invites the applicant to send in further evidence or any other comments they wish to make in support of their eligibility.</p>

<p><b>1.3.2</b> Ensure that carers can access benefits advice as early as possible when their caring role begins</p>	<p><b>Social Protection</b></p>	<p>Information on Carers' entitlements is available at each Intreo office.</p> <p>Link to Carers' Association website included on DSP Carers' webpage.</p> <p>Attendance at the Care &amp; Mobility Show 2015 provided a means to get information across to existing and potential future customers.</p>
<p><b>1.3.3</b> Publicise more widely that the Carer's Allowance can be shared by two carers providing care on a part time basis</p>	<p><b>Social Protection</b></p>	<p>Attendance at the Care &amp; Mobility Show 2015 provided a means to get information in relation to care-sharing across to existing and potential future customers.</p> <p>In addition, CA section is looking into other cost-effective methods of publicising this information.</p>
<p><b>1.3.4</b> Continue to work to reduce waiting periods for processing of Carer's Allowance</p>	<p><b>Social Protection</b></p>	<p>Waiting times have increased somewhat during 2015 due to significant and ongoing increases in the numbers applying for CA. 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> <p>In order to improve processing times, forms which are substantially uncompleted will be returned to</p>

applications and appeals		the applicant without being registered.
<b>1.3.5</b> Review existing transition arrangements for carers at the end of their caring role.	<b>Social Protection</b>	Carers continue to qualify for carer's allowance and carer's benefit for a period of six weeks following the loss of a loved one.
<b>National Goal 2</b>		
<b>Support carers to manage their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing</b>		
<b>Objective 2.1</b>		
<b>Promote the development of supports and services to protect the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of carers</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Update for Sept 2014-Sept 2015</b>
<b>2.1.1</b> Raise awareness among health and personal social service providers of the physical and emotional health issues that carers may experience	<b>HSE</b>	<p>The HSE is developing a Carers' Needs Assessment as part of the Single Assessment Tool which will identify and raise awareness of carers' needs. See response to 1.1.6 for further information.</p> <p>All CHO's report activity relating to this action. Awareness is raised through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary care teams including the public health nursing service</li> <li>• Network Specialists Teams and Services e.g. Children's Disability Teams</li> <li>• Health Area Specialist Teams and Services, e.g Home Care Package co-ordinators / managers</li> <li>• Staff training</li> <li>• Development of care &amp; support plans</li> <li>• Carer Support groups</li> <li>• Alzheimer cafes</li> <li>• Training courses for carers</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working in partnership with the Carers Association and other relevant organisations.</li> </ul>
<b>2.1.2</b> Encourage carers to attend their GP for an annual health check	<b>Health</b>	<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 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 and to all persons aged 70 and over on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2015. The Government has also provided for the extension of GP care without fees to all children aged 6 to 11 years in the latter part of 2016. This extension is subject to negotiation with the Irish Medical Organisation and will be implemented in the context of a new GP contract. Through a combination of the phased roll-out of universal GP care and the means –tested medical and GP cards scheme, over 2.1 million people have access to a GP service without fees.</p>
	<b>HSE</b>	<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 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>
<b>2.1.3</b> 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	<b>HSE</b>	<p>HSE Services for Older people are progressing the SAT project, with a view to full implementation in 2017.</p> <p>The HSE has committed to developing a specific Carer Needs Assessment in 2015 as part of the Inter RAI Single Assessment Tool, for testing in 2016 and national and international implementation in 2017. The Carers’ Needs Assessment will be developed in Ireland and then rolled out for international use in over 30 countries currently using Inter RAI tools.</p> <p>A Carers’ Needs Assessment Working Group was established comprising members of the HSE national SAT project team and representatives from Carer and voluntary organisations, along with international members of the Inter RAI Instrument and System Development committee. Meetings and workshops were held and a draft Carers’ Needs Assessment has been produced. A scoping exercise to test this draft is planned for Q3- Q4 2015.</p>

<p><b>2.1.4</b> Continue to implement the recommendations of the Home Solutions Report (13) on telecare</p>	<p><b>HSE</b></p>	<p>Across the HSE there are a number of telehealth services, projects or initiatives, for example;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors Alert Service</li> <li>• Falls detectors</li> <li>• Property exits</li> <li>• Telehealth solutions for dementia</li> <li>• Telecare providing information, advice, and a listening ear.</li> </ul> <p>Community groups are funded through Local Authorities to provide telecare initiatives. Where this is in place HSE staff members, usually 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>
<p><b>2.1.5</b> Promote awareness of adult and child protection services that are in place</p>	<p><b>HSE</b></p>	<p>'Social Care Division launched the Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy &amp; Procedures in December 2014. This document replaces the HSE policy 'Responding to Allegations of Elder Abuse'.</p> <p>A National Safeguarding office has been established led by a senior manager from older persons services.</p> <p>A recruitment process was undertaken to employ an additional 21.7 Social Worker WTEs for the Safeguarding teams in the nine CHOs. It is envisaged that all staff will be in post by end October.</p> <p>A HSE Children First Lead was appointed to ensure that the health and social care services of the HSE meet their responsibilities under Children First 2011 and Children First legislation (when enacted). The Lead is also responsible to ensure that 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 draft Child Protection &amp; Welfare Policy was developed during the year and is due to be signed off and finalized in October 2015. Following that each Division, Community Health Organisation and Acute Hospital group will be tasked to develop guidelines for their services and implementation</p>



		plans for 2016.
		There is a mandatory training programme for all HSE employees in Children First.
<b>2.1.6</b> Review the 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.	<b>Health</b>	<p>The Programme for Government 2011-2016 states that “the Fair Deal system of financing nursing home care will be reviewed 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”. In addition, <i>Future Health – A Strategic Framework for Reform of the Health Service 2012 – 2015</i> states that the Department of Health will develop policy in relation to the introduction of financial assessment, contribution and charges for certain social and continuing care services.</p> <p>The review of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme was published in July and included a general examination of the operation of the Scheme, as well as the balance between residential care and care in the community.</p> <p>An Interdepartmental/Agency Working Group is being established to progress the recommendations contained in the review. This group will be chaired by the Department of Health and will comprise relevant officials from the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the HSE, the Revenue Commissioners, and the National Treatment Purchase Fund where relevant.</p> <p>The Working Group is due to present a first annual report to the Cabinet Committee in June 2016 to include details, in particular, of the progress achieved in improving the assessment of income and assets, including home ownership, and the validation of associated declarations by applicants.</p>
<b>2.1.7</b> Progress the development and implementation of national standards for	<b>Health</b>	<p>The HSE is reviewing its home care services and hopes to introduce a new streamlined model of care, which will help to standardise services nationally and improve quality control in services provided or procured by the HSE. Service providers engaged by the HSE are monitored through Service Level Agreements and supervised through regular local operational meetings and review of care plans</p>

home support services, which will be subject to inspection by the Health and Information Quality Authority (HIQA).		
	<b>HSE</b>	Through the National Tender for Enhanced Home Care Packages launched on the 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2012, the HSE established Quality Standards that all successful tenders had to demonstrate they reached in order to become HSE Approved Providers. These standards were subsequently incorporated within the service agreements for all home care providers. The standards support the HIQA National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare (June 2012).
<b>Objective 2.2</b>		
<b>Support children and young people with caring responsibilities and protect them from the adverse impacts of caring</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Update for Sept 2014-Sept 2015</b>
<b>2.2.1</b> Raise awareness and understanding among education providers of the signs that children and young people have caring responsibilities and the impact of caring on	<b>DCYA</b>	<p>TUSLA has established formal links with the Department of Education and Skills. Referrals are made to Educational Welfare Officers through Meitheal (a national practice model for all agencies working with children, young people and their families) if and when required.</p> <p>School Attendance Strategy Guidelines are complete and are currently being published by the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) of TUSLA as a practical support for schools in the preparation of School Attendance Strategies as outlined in Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. The guidelines will assist schools to implement effective measures to support children at risk of poor attendance and participation, including those with caring responsibilities. It is intended that they will be circulated to schools in October 2015. (TUSLA)</p> <p>The National Youth Strategy 2015-2020 for 10 to 24 year olds has been finalised and is due to be published shortly. 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</p>

them		<p>young carers, the Strategy commits to progressing the following actions over 2015-2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.2.2</b> Encourage statutory agencies to review the way that they respond to children and young people with caring responsibilities</p>	<p><b>DCYA</b></p>	<p>See 2.2.1 on the National Youth Strategy.</p> <p>Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) are tasked with bringing together relevant statutory, community and voluntary organisations to ensure that the needs of children and young people are identified at local level and addressed. An example of this is shown recently in Donegal where concern was expressed at the Health &amp; Wellbeing Sub-Group of Donegal Children and Young People's Services Committee. A multi-agency young carers working group for Donegal was then established which organised a seminar involving statutory and community and voluntary services, on the topic of young carers, and a youth consultation workshop. Following these a Young Carers' Support Group was established in 2014. This Young Carers Initiative is led by Donegal Youth Service in partnership with Comhairle na nÓg (Donegal Youth Council).</p> <p>TUSLA is in the process of refining and implementing a new strategic approach to service delivery through the integrated working of its service strands.(TUSLA)</p>
<p><b>2.2.3</b> Identify support services needed by children and young people with caring</p>	<p><b>HSE</b></p>	<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 the advice from their Line Manager and consider child welfare and protection issues. Where there is deemed to be child welfare and protection issue a referral is made to TUSLA.</p>

responsibilities and create mechanisms for young carers to contact service providers		Under the HSE Service Plan for 2015 the Child & Adolescence Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has specific actions to prioritise a reduction in the number of children and adolescents on waiting lists to be seen by the Community CAMHS teams and the extension of the service to all 16 and 17 year olds.
<b>2.2.4</b> Investigate and analyse the situation of children and young people undertaking caring roles	<b>DCYA</b>	<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 &amp; Carers in Ireland”. The Department published the “State of the Nation’s Children – Ireland 2012” in March 2013 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 for publication in early 2015 but will now be published in early 2016.</p>
<b>National Goal 3</b>		
<b>Support carers to care with confidence through the provision of adequate information, training, services and supports</b>		
<b>Objective 3.1</b>		
<b>Promote the availability of user friendly and timely information and advice</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Update for Sept 2014-Sept 2015</b>
<b>3.1.1</b> Ensure frontline staff in key ‘first contact’	<b>Environment</b>	In line with the priority action in the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability (NHSPWD) Implementation Framework to achieve a coordinated approach to service delivery, the majority of housing authorities have now established Housing and Disability Steering Groups (HDSGs). These will facilitate integrated and timely responses to the housing needs of people with

<p>agencies such 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>		<p>disabilities in each city/county area. The remaining HDSGs will be up and running shortly. One of the items under their remit is the setting up of Housing Advice Centres in their respective local authorities and work on these is expected to be progressed in 2016. The pilot Housing Advice Centre in Cork City Council did not proceed due to key personnel changes in the Council and the agreed Service Provider.</p> <p>As part of the priority action in the Implementation Framework to ensure equitable access for people with disabilities, housing authorities must develop specific local strategies to meet the identified needs of people with disabilities. The strategies will form an integral part of the local authority Housing Service Plans and will promote and support the delivery of accommodation for people with disabilities using all appropriate housing supply mechanisms. The majority of existing HDSGs have prepared a Strategic Plan for their county/city area and these are currently being collated by the Housing Agency into a draft National Plan.</p>
	<b>Health</b>	<p>A Section on Carers is available on the Department's website, with links to the Carer's Strategy and second Annual Report. There is also a link to the Carers Association website.</p>
	<b>Social Protection</b>	<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>Link to Carers' Association website included on DSP Carers' webpage.</p>
	<b>HSE</b>	<p>All CHOs report staff are enabled to provide information to carers through presentations by the Carers Association, staff training, team meetings, sharing of local knowledge of supports and services.</p> <p>In addition to providing carers and their families with improved comprehensive information on services and supports available to them, the HSE in August signed off a Communication Plan to</p>

		<p>address deficits in information for carers and improve communication. The Carers Association and Care Alliance were asked to consult with carers as to the kind of information carers require. This will be used to assist the HSE in improving information and access to information. Work on this project will commence in Q4 2015.</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: <a href="http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie/">http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie/</a></p>
<p><b>3.1.2</b> 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</p>	<p><b>Social Protection</b></p>	<p>Carers’ Week was highlighted with a Banner Headline on the DSP Website.</p> <p>A link to the Carers’ Association 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>In Q4 2015 the Dept will be commencing a comprehensive review/redraft of the CR1 (application form for CA). This will be done in conjunction with the Department’s information service and forms design section. The primary focus of the redraft will be to assist applicants to provide all necessary detail at application stage to enable the Dept to make a quality decision.</p> <p>We 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 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>

to be a carer's first point of contact		
	<b>HSE</b>	See response to 3.1.1 re HSE Communication Plan.
<b>3.1.3</b> Ensure that the information needs of sub-groups of carers, such as older carers, children and young people with caring responsibilities, carers in rural areas are addressed	<b>Health</b>	A Section on Carers is available on the Department's website, with links to the Carer's Strategy and second Annual Report. There is also a link to the Carers Association website
	<b>Social Protection</b>	<p>Attendance at the Care &amp; Mobility Show 2015 provided a means to get information across to existing and potential future customers.</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 Carers Association website now exists on the Departments website which provides details of local supports and services available to carers as promoted by the Carers Association website.</p>
	<b>HSE</b>	All CHO's report that information needs of carers living in rural areas is addressed through a number of ways, sometimes service specific: for example child disability teams who support families.

		<p>In the main information is provided through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Care teams</li> <li>• Public Health Nursing service</li> <li>• Network Specialists Teams</li> <li>• Health Area Specialist Teams</li> <li>• Care &amp; Support planning process</li> <li>• Referral to the Carers Association and other relevant organisations</li> <li>• Carer support groups</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Meetings with families.</li> </ul> <p>This action will be further addressed though the HSE Communicaiton Plan: See response to 3.1.1 &amp; 3.1.2</p>
	<b>DCYA</b>	<p>The DCYA website includes a link to the National Carers’Strategy, the second Annual Progress Report and a link to the Carers’ Association dedicated Young Carer page (<a href="http://www.youngcarers.ie">www.youngcarers.ie</a>).</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"> <li>• Facilitate access to quality information through various media for young people, parents and families</li> <li>• Review existing youth information provision and support in the context of achieving the five national outcomes for young people</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.1.4</b> Proactively collate and disseminate information about services and supports</p>	<b>HSE</b>	<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"> <li>• Primary Care teams including the Public Health Nursing service</li> <li>• Network Specialists Teams</li> <li>• Health Area Specialist Teams</li> <li>• Carer Support Groups</li> <li>• Carer Training courses provided by the HSE or by Carer Support Groups</li> </ul>



available at a local level for carers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Centres</li> <li>• HSE Helpline</li> </ul> <p>This action will also be assisted by the HSE Communication Plan / See response to 3.1.1 &amp; 3.1.2</p>
<b>Objective 3.2</b> <b>Provide relevant and accessible carer training opportunities for carers</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Update for Sept 2014-Sept 2015</b>
3.2.1 Identify gaps in the content of current training programmes for carers (in conjunction with carer's representative organisations)	Education	The role of Education and Training Boards (ETBs) is to respond to a range of local needs including those identified by carer organisations as well as further education and training needs identified by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and other relevant Government research and reports.
	HSE	<p>All CHO's report a range of training programmes provided through the HSE or carers representative organisations covering a range of topics.</p> <p>The HSE recently undertook a scoping exercise with NGO providers of courses for family carers. To date details of family carer training and supports from 12 agencies have been compiled and we are awaiting information from other organisations. This information will form the basis of consultation with the various relevant stakeholders with a view to inform future planning of courses.</p>
3.2.2 Enhance the accessibility of education and	Education	ETBs continue to provide access routes to education and training courses. These include distance and blended learning options.

training courses through the use of face-to face, on-line and distance learning options		
	<b>HSE</b>	Across the country training courses are delivered in the local community to family carers by the Carers Association and the HSE. Courses are mostly delivered through group work and one to one training where appropriate.  Refer to 3.2.1
<b>Objective 3.3</b>		
<b>Promote the development of accessible living environments for all</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Update for Sept 2014-Sept 2015</b>
<b>3.3.1</b> 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	<b>Environment</b>	As noted in last year's Report, key changes to the Housing Adaptation grant Schemes were made following a review: details were included in last year's report.  The suite of grants available under this scheme continues to provide significant social benefit by facilitating the continued independent occupancy of their own homes by older people and people with a disability.  Exchequer funding of over €37 million was provided in 2014 for these Grants. This, combined with the Local Authority's contribution gave an overall spend of €46.3 million. This funded grants for 7,500 households. At national level in 2015, this combined allocation was increased by some 10% to give a combined spend of €50.5 million – this is expected to fund 7,800 grants.

timely way		
<b>3.3.2</b> Identify good practice in implementing assistive technology and ambient assistive living technology to support independent living and telehealth opportunities	<b>HSE</b>	<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 equipment / technologies.</p> <p>The HSE has a number of assistive technology programmes/pilots running in CHO's. These programmes are in the main supporting clients in disability and older persons services.</p> <p>The Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI) developed an App <b>RCSI MyHealth</b> which provides easy access to credible health information and was launched in September 2015. It is available free of charge in the Apple App Store and in Google Play.</p>
<b>3.3.3</b> Review and up-date Transport Sectoral Plan under Disability Act 2005	<b>Transport</b>	DTTAS proposes to undertake the next review of its Sectoral Plan in 2016. The review will include a comprehensive consultation process which, among other things, will afford the Carers' Association an opportunity to make an input to the development of the next plan.
<b>National Goal 4</b>		
<b>Empower carers to participate as fully as possible in economic and social life</b>		
<b>Objective 4.1</b>		
<b>Enable carers to have respite breaks</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Update for Sept 2014-Sept 2015</b>
<b>4.1.1</b> Promote a	<b>Social Protection</b>	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.

better awareness of the existence of the Respite Care Grant		Applicants who are disallowed on grounds other than medical are now advised that they may have an entitlement to the Respite Care 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
4.1.2 Promote a range of person-centred and flexible respite options	<b>HSE</b>	<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"> <li>• Primary Care Teams</li> <li>• Public Health Nursing Service</li> <li>• Network Specialist Teams and Services</li> <li>• Health Area Specialist Teams and Services</li> <li>• Home Help / Home Care Package Managers</li> <li>• Carer Support Groups</li> <li>• Carer Organisations</li> <li>• Training courses for carers</li> </ul> <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	<b>HSE</b>	The HSE is establishing a sub group of the HSE Multi Divisional Carer Strategy group in 2016 to review respite services.

indicators for the provision of respite services		
<b>Objective 4.2</b>		
<b>Enable carers to remain in touch with the labour market to the greatest extent possible</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Update for Sept 2014-Sept 2015</b>
<b>4.2.1</b> Promote existing carer friendly HR policies within Government Departments and Agencies	<b>Environment</b>	A full range of flexible working arrangements and family friendly policies, including the Carer's Leave Scheme, are available to staff to assist in combining work and caring responsibilities and are promoted on the Department's intranet.
	<b>Education</b>	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.
	<b>Health</b>	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.
	<b>Justice</b>	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. The Department currently has five staff on Carer's Leave.
	<b>DCYA</b>	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).  Family friendly policies in TUSLA include flexi-time and shorter working time, facilitated where feasible by management. (TUSLA)
<b>4.2.2</b> Promote awareness of the Carer's Leave Act 2001	<b>HSE</b>	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.
	<b>DCYA</b>	The DCYA's staff handbook, which is available to all staff on its intranet, provides information on carers' leave.
	<b>Jobs</b>	DJEL's responsibility in this area relates to supporting the employment rights of all people in the workforce, including carers. There have been significant reforms of the institutional arrangements which underpin the system of employment rights in Ireland through the establishment of the Workplace Relations Commission on 1 October 2015. The new structures and procedures aim to deliver a more efficient, cost-effective and user-friendly workplace relations service. They also aim to provide for improved means of redress and enforcement within a reasonable period to the benefit of all who seek to vindicate their employment rights, including carers. Chapter 8 of the Workplace Relations Commission's updated "Guide to Employment, Labour and Equality Law" provides comprehensive information in relation to Carers' Leave for employees and employers: <a href="https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/Publications_Forms/Guide_to_Employment_Labour_and_Equality_Law_.pdf">https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/Publications_Forms/Guide_to_Employment_Labour_and_Equality_Law_.pdf</a>  Policy responsibility for the Carer's Leave Act 2001 transferred from the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to the Minister for Justice and Equality with effect from 1 October 2015. 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.
<b>4.2.3</b> Encourage		See 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 above

work-life balance provisions that are needed to ensure that working arrangements are carer friendly		
<b>4.2.4</b> Explore how back-to-work and education training courses can be tailored to the needs of carers who wish to return to the workplace	<b>Education</b>	ETBs continue to provide access to a large range of part time, full time and distance (e-learning) education and training courses to which carers have access.
<b>4.2.5</b> Review access by family carers to labour market activation measures	<b>Social Protection</b>	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.