



**NEWS RELEASE**

**7<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**MINISTER OF STATE HOCTOR ENCOURAGES CARER'S STRATEGY CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Máire Hctor TD, Minister of State** with Responsibility for **Older People today** (7 March 2008) encouraged members of the public and in particular, family and informal carers in the community to participate in the consultation process for the National Carer's Strategy, which commences today and continues until Friday 18 April 2008.

As advertised in today's national papers, the Strategy will set out the Government's vision for family and informal carers and establish a set of goals and actions in areas such as income support, health care and services, housing, transport, information services, labour market issues, programme of training (during caring and post caring), social inclusion and research and technology development.

**Minister of State Hctor TD** said: "Carers play a very valuable, and much valued, role in our society. Supporting and recognising carers and their contribution to communities across the country is and has been a priority of Government since 1997. I am determined to continue to work for and with carers to ensure that the people who devote their time and energy to caring for others receive the supports and services they need."

Minister Hctor reiterated the Government's commitment to facilitating older people and people with disabilities to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. She said that the development of a National Carer's Strategy; "provides us with an opportunity to build further on the improvements made to date and to consider other areas where further progress can be made." She encouraged members of the public to submit their views as part of the consultation process, "on areas relating to caring which are of particular concern to them".

An inter-departmental working group has been established by the Government to develop the National Carer's Strategy. The working group is chaired by the Department of An Taoiseach and the secretariat is provided by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The working group includes officials from a number of Departments and Agencies, including the Departments of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Health and Children as well as the HSE and FÁS.



## **Department of Social and Family Affairs**

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Budget 2008 aims to strengthen the framework of supports for family carers. Budget increases for this year have brought the **Carer's Allowance** for those aged 66 or over to €232 per week and under 66 years to €214 per week. This increase in the weekly rates will benefit an estimated 41,500 carers over the course of 2008. Budget 2008 also provides for an increase in the **Respite Care Grant** of €200 bringing the value of the grant to €1,700 for each care recipient. This measure will benefit over 48,000 carers from this coming June. The Respite Care Grant, was introduced in 1999 and has since been extended to all carers who are providing full-time care and attention regardless of their income.

Since September 2007, in a new initiative, carers who are eligible for a social welfare payment other than Carer's Allowance or Benefit can receive that payment plus an additional payment of up to half the maximum rate of Carer's Allowance. To date approximately 7,000 carers have benefited from this new arrangement.

Submissions on the development of **National Carer's Strategy** can be made to the Department of Social and Family Affairs by:

- email to [carers.strategy@welfare.ie](mailto:carers.strategy@welfare.ie),
- fax to 01-7043457, or
- by post to the Secretariat which is located in the Department of Social and Family Affairs at the following address:

National Carer's Strategy Consultation,  
Planning Unit, Floor 1  
Department of Social and Family Affairs,  
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada,  
Store Street, Dublin 1.

The closing date for submissions is Friday 18 April 2008.

### **ENDS**

### **Editor's Note:**

The development of the National Carer's Strategy is a commitment in the National Partnership Agreement *Towards 2016* and in the Government's *Programme for Government*.

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