



Strategic Plan 2014 - 2018

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Introduction

This is the West Cork Carers Support Group's (WCCSG's) five year strategic plan. WCCSG is committed to valuing and supporting Carers and to constantly monitoring, reviewing and evaluating our work so that we can remain clear about our focus and identity. We recognise the need for continued change in order to remain relevant and progressive.

Our strategic plan represents our renewed commitment to support and address the issues faced by Carers in West Cork. To achieve this, during 2013 we have undertaken a three month consultation process led by an external consultant which involved:

- An Internet Survey of Carers
- One to one interviews with Carers/former Carers
- Written submissions from Carers
- Meetings with board members and staff
- Written submissions from board members
- A consultation survey with other stakeholders

The methodology of this review was empirical in nature, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, which have been combined to advance our knowledge about important aspects of Carers lives and the issues they face.

The management committee wishes to thank all who contributed to our consultation process.

We hope that the following document will guide our work together over the next five years for the benefit of Carers in West Cork.

The Role of Carers

The Census of Population Ireland defines a Carer as those who provide regular, unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability. (CSO, 2011)

There are 187,000 Carers in Ireland who provide unpaid care and support to family members, neighbours and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, or who are frail and elderly.

Carers not only provide hands-on care like bathing, dressing, and feeding, but also essential tasks such as medication management, shopping, doctors visits, and hours of essential companionship or supervision. Their role may involve round the clock care, very often without recognition, help or financial support. Carers often inherit their caring role, along with other family relationships. Carers may live with the person they care for or they might live elsewhere.

Carers not only make a profound difference to the health, well being and quality of life of those that they care for, but they also make an important, often unacknowledged contribution to the economy. It is estimated that Ireland's Carers save the State €2.5 billion each year.

Caring is an important part of the human experience. Caring relationships are often characterised by love and support and can be incredibly enriching.

Whilst caring can be a rewarding experience, deepening friendships and relationships, it can also be physically and emotionally demanding, potentially affecting Carers' health and

wellbeing. Carers can experience reduced physical, mental and emotional health once caring commences and over time the effects may be intensified. Many Carers also experience social isolation and financial hardship as a result of their caring role.

West Cork Carers Support Group - Background and History

The West Cork Carers Support Group (WCCSG) is a non-governmental organisation which is core funded by the Health Service Executive (HSE). WCCSG is the only dedicated support organisation for Carers in West Cork. Since its inception in 1998, WCCSG has played a vital and valuable role in supporting Carers.

WCCSG's approach towards Carers is based on the understanding that Carers are the main providers of care and support in the community, and they should be acknowledged and supported in their role. It should be noted that the costs and special value of the care they provide, which includes personal and emotional support, treatment and 24-hour supervision, could never be replaced by health and community care services. We do not underestimate Carers' invaluable contribution to society.

In 2014, as we embarked on yet another year of austerity, there is a greater need than ever to ensure that Carers are supported and have access to timely information, support to care, practical and financial assistance, emotional support and help to maintain their own health. We have a role in ensuring Carers' voices are heard, their needs are addressed and that they are treated as partners in care.

WCCSG has always taken a Carer centered approach and with Carers direct input, works to meet the emerging needs of Carers through numerous partnerships and collaboration with the statutory, voluntary and community sector.

Resources

In the recent years, the organisation has grown substantially in response to the increasing awareness of Carers' needs with an ever-increasing workload, more staff, the need for increased funding, and a vast network of Carer members throughout the region. Such growth has created its own pressures, which in turn has necessitated ongoing adaptation and greater organisational clarity.

Premises

West Cork Carers Support Group is based in Bridge Street, Bantry, County Cork.

WCCSG has always recognised the importance of having access to suitable, comfortable premises as a catalyst to the provision of a user-friendly service. In 2009 we relocated to our current location, a ground floor shop-front premises in the centre of Bantry town. This has enabled the Group to provide much improved visibility and accessibility, and to further develop the provision of services and supports offered to Carers.

Management Committee

WCCSG Management Committee is composed of twelve members. The membership is structured as follows:

Members of the Board of Management of the West Cork Carers Support Group:

Sheilah Holtby	Chairperson
Anne O'Donovan	Vice Chairperson
Theresa O'Mahony	Treasurer
Eleanor O'Donovan	Assistant Treasurer
Maureen Broughton	Health and Safety Officer
Freddie Sherriff	Public Relations Officer
Louise Casey	
Marian White	
Joe Cronin	
Finbar O'Donoghue	

Health Service Executive (HSE) Committee Members

Gina Kelly	Community Worker
Joanna McCarthy	Assistant Director, Public health Nursing

The Management Committee gives invaluable leadership to the group. We greatly value the diversity of the talents and experiences of those on the committee in giving direction and guidance to the work of the organisation.

Carer representation on the Board remains crucial in ensuring that the organisation is Carer led. Carers on our Board represent the broad body of Carers through their understanding of different caring experiences and their representation of different geographical areas of West Cork.

Staff

With a dedicated and motivated staff that is greatly valued by Carers, the WCCSG has established itself as a highly regarded and effective organisation in West Cork. Its high rating (in the 2003 review 95 per cent of Carers give the WCCSG a very positive rating) is the result of the: caring response of staff; the fact that Carers feel understood and listened to by staff; and, the professionalism of staff. The fact that Carers feel understood and listened to is highly significant as it allows for Carers' experience to enrich the style and character of the WCCSG and to ensure that the organisation remains Carer-led. This together with regular feed-back from Carers and the large proportion of members of the management board who are Carers (eight of the ten members are Carers/former Carers) ensures that the WCCSG continues to be Carer-directed.ⁱ

Staff Members

Sally-ann Back	Coordinator
Lorna Harte	Carers Support Worker
Olivia Andrews	Administrator and Company Secretary
John Fox	IT Support Assistant (CE Scheme)

Staff together with the management board have shown considerable leadership and vision and have spent much time over the last couple of years ensuring that the organisational structures and policies are fit for purpose.ⁱⁱ In 2012/13 there has been substantial progress made in both reviewing our existing policies, and the development of new policies and

procedures. Our aim is to have a well governed organisation to ensure good practice, and an efficient and effective delivery of the service.

Information Technology (IT) has also been enhanced and the WCCSG website has been upgraded and a Facebook page launched. This will allow for greater connectivity with Carers and networking with statutory and voluntary organisations. This continued priority given to IT is important for success in the modern “information” world. ⁱⁱⁱ

In 2013 WCCSG had contact with over 500 Carers. This is 17 per cent (one in six) of the 2,890 Carers living in West Cork.

The WCCSG is operating within severe financial restraints with cut-backs to its funding and an increase in demand for its services. This continues to be a major challenge to the organisation. At the present time, and as a result of the improvements made to the service thus far, we recognise that resources, both human and capital, are at full capacity.

However, despite these restrictions WCCSG is committed to planning for the future needs of Carers as evidenced in this strategic plan.

Key Service Areas

West Cork Carers Support Group currently provides a wide range of essential services and support to improve the quality of life of Carers. The key service areas driven by the Board and developed and delivered by the organisation are:

- Information, guidance and referral when navigating the complex systems of care
- A listening ear, recognition and acknowledgement
- One to one supports through our Drop-In, email and Support Line services
- Emotional support and practical assistance with e.g. application forms for health and welfare entitlements
- Relaxation, Recreational and Educational Courses
- Social Activities and Events
- Practical Carer Courses
- Seminars on issues of relevance to Carers
- Respite breaks and funds
- Courses and events to promote Carers Health and Well Being
- Support with IT and Communication Skills: one to one and group support with emailing, accessing the Internet or Facebook, virus protection, Skype, etc.
- Facebook: an online support and discussion forum, that brings Carers together, to swap ideas, share information and support each other
- Quarterly newsletter
- Facilitating peer group supports in five locations throughout West Cork

- Promotion and Awareness
- Influencing government and other stakeholder policies at a local and national level
- Development of new initiatives including: specific supports for male Carers and young Carers, a Carers Information Pack, Guide, and emergency card, IT supports for Carers

Our Vision

Carers are recognised, valued and supported for the positive contribution they make to our community.

Our Mission

West Cork Carers Support Group's role is to make a positive difference to the lives of Carers. We will continue to do this by promoting and supporting Carers through quality Carer centred services, based on best practice and working in partnership with all of our stakeholders.

Our Values

The principal values that highlight our service delivery are:

- Having a Carer centred, friendly and approachable service, with an emphasis on mutual respect and courtesy
- Ensuring that we remain "Carer Led" by including Carers at all times in our planning, decision-making and activities
- Valuing and endorsing individual Carers' choice
- Confidentiality and sensitivity to individual needs
- Promoting self determination and not creating dependency
- Empowering Carers to make decisions about how they choose to live their lives as individuals in their own right
- Be accessible to all, regardless of caring situations
- Be of high quality
- Striving for innovation and continuous improvement
- Working in close collaboration with other organisations while maintaining a right to an independent view
- Ensuring consultation and participation in decision making at all levels

Our Strategic Plan

Four Core Goals

West Cork Carers Support Group has developed four core goals to realise our vision and mission. They are:

- 1. To Network And Raise Awareness Of Carers Issues**
- 2. To Develop Carers Support Programmes**
- 3. To Positively Influence Policy And Practice**
- 4. To Continue To Build The Organisational Capacity Of The Organisation**

Objectives

The objectives of WCCSG are:

Objectives for Goal One: To network and raise awareness of Carers issues

1. Strengthen public awareness and recognition of the role and contribution of Carers
2. Link with key NGOs and groups to raise awareness of Carers' needs, identify common issues and progress shared goals. A specific focus will be on:
 - Older people and the dementia sector
 - Mental health focused organisations and groups
 - Disability sector, specifically in the areas of intellectual, and physical and sensory disabilities
3. Extend and strengthen relationships with national Carer groups

Objectives for Goal Two: To develop Carers support programmes

1. Continue to develop a high quality, accessible Carers programme
2. Ensuring responsive and appropriate supports are delivered by having the Carers needs at the centre of all planning and service delivery
3. Reach more Carers
4. The promotion of Carers health and well-being is intensified
5. To provide Carers respite breaks in innovative and personalised ways
6. Information provision about services, benefits and entitlements is enhanced
7. To present Carers with training opportunities and emergency planning initiatives

Objectives for Goal Three: To positively influence policy and practice

1. Identify opportunities to influence government policies, practice and culture to be more inclusive of Carer needs and issues
2. Work with the national network of Carer organisations to progress national Carers' issues

3. Promote the benefits of Carer representation and advocate for extended representation in general
4. Work with the Carers Issues Forum (CIF)* to raise the profile of Carers and promote Carers issues

Objectives for Goal Four: To continue to build the organisational capacity of the organisation

1. Develop and implement effective policies and procedures
2. Maintain and regularly evaluate WCCSG's governance structure and board processes
3. Maintain the stability of a dedicated and effective staff team
4. Develop and maintain the organisations funding and resources to enable the organisation to grow

Implementation of our Goals and Objectives:

Short to Medium Term Actions (2014 -2016)

Goal one: To network and raise awareness of Carers issues

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
1. Strengthen public awareness and recognition of the role and contribution of Carers	1.1. Make use of the media to highlight the value and role of Carers and the WCCSG	Publicity Officer Coordinator	1.1. Develop publicity strategy and campaign to highlight the value and role of Carers and increase the public profile of the WCCSG 1.1 Develop links with 2/3 journalists in the local/regional media 1.1. Number of media opportunities utilised to provide coverage of WCCSG and Carers issues	2014 2014 Annually
	1.2 Develop effective, annual Carers Week programme and enhance media coverage of the event	Publicity Officer Coordinator Care Alliance Ireland	1.2 Running of effective, annual Carers Week programme with media coverage	Q2 Annually
	1.3 Identify and invite individuals to serve as Carer representatives able to speak at public events and raise the profile of Carers	Board Staff	1.3 Carer representatives identified	2014
	1.4 Shadow a number of Carers in the home and document the broad range of caring work that is undertaken	Board Staff Researcher	1.4 Explore funding possibilities and appropriate researcher 1.4 Identified Carer(s) willing to take part 1.4 Four case studies on the role and work of Carers developed	2014 - 2018
	1.5 Make a documentary film on the role and work of Carers. EU funding for this could be investigated	Board Staff Documentary Film Maker	1.5 Funding for documentary film secured 1.5 Documentary film made	2014 - 2018

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
2. Link with key NGOs and groups to raise awareness of Carers' needs identify common issues and progress shared goals. A specific focus will be on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Older people and the dementia sector ▪ Mental health focused organisations and groups ▪ Disability sector, specifically in the areas of intellectual, and physical and sensory disabilities 	2.1 Identify relevant agencies whose competence match those identified in Objective 2. and form links to work collaboratively where appropriate	Board Staff	2.1 Evidence of formation of links with new NGOs or the continuance of existing relationships such as: CIS, CoAction, NLN, RehabCare, WCMHS, The Alzheimer's Society of Ireland etc.	Annually
	2.2 To build upon the work with primary care teams and mental health teams re awareness of Carers needs	Coordinator	2.2 Evidence of continuance and development of existing relationships	Annually
	2.3 Review membership, and seek new representation with other relevant NGOs to raise awareness of Carers and Carers' issues	Board Coordinator	2.3 Annual review of membership of external boards/committees 2.3 Evidence of Board members taking up representation on external boards with effective feedback 2.3 Participation and promotion of Carer issues on relevant committees and forums of NGOs	Q1 Annually Annually Annually
	2.4 Identify relevant and designated dates to raise awareness of Carers (such as world Mental Health Day, world Alzheimer's Awareness month) which coincide with the shared interest of other NGOs	Staff	2.4 Promotion of Carers issues through the interaction with the NGOs on designated dates	Annually
3. Extend and strengthen relationships with national Carer groups	3.1 Continue our membership and increase our collaborative working with national Carers organisations	Coordinator	3.1 Membership of Carers Alliance, Caring for Carers and Carers association renewed	Annually
	3.2 Contribute to national opportunities to raise the profile of Carers at strategic times including National Carers week and pre-election	Coordinator	3.2 Evidence of collaboration with national Carers group at strategic times	Annually

Goal two: To develop Carers support programmes

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
1. Continue to develop our high quality, accessible Carers programme	1.1 High quality programme of supports and services will be continued	Board Staff	1.1.Services kept under review	Annually
	1.2 All reasonable steps to make programme of supports accessible will be taken	Staff	1.2 Transport and respite needs of service users are considered as well as geographical spread when planning events	Annually
	1.3 Explore new and innovative supports and services to meet the changing needs of Carers	Carers Staff Board	1.3 Carers input and feedback	Annually
	1.4 Develop specific supports for particular care types, e.g. Carers of persons with intellectual disability, physical/sensory disability, mental ill health, older persons, dementia etc. (working in partnership with other organisations)	WCCSG with partner organisations	(See Goal 1 Objective 2)	Carers of persons with: Intellectual disability 2014 Physical/sensory disability 2015 Mental ill health 2016 Older persons 2017 Alzheimer's Disease/ Dementia 2018
	1.5 Expansion of Drop-in service to be investigated	Staff WCCSG HSE	1.5 Option of specific appointment times for Bantry Drop-ins will be promoted 1.5 More localised drop-in service in main towns explored and developed if funding/resources permits	2014 2015
	1.6 Continue to actively promote the Support-line service for both incoming and out-going calls	Staff	1.6 Monitor number of Carers calling or receiving support-line calls	Annually

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
	1.7 Continue to provide regular, accessible, Carer led support group meetings	Staff	1.7 Bi monthly support group meetings held in 5 locations (Bantry, Skibbereen, Clonakilty, Dunmanway, Beara)	Annually
	1.8 Expand our innovative range of social events	Staff	1.8 Number of social events expanded as funding/resources permits (see Goal 2 Objective 2.2) 1.8. Movie night organised 1.8 Outing to Myross Wood Retreat Centre organised	Annually 2014 (Q4) 2014 (Q4)
	1.9 Continue to provide seminars and information sessions based on Carers identified needs	WCCSG with partner organisations	1.9 Incorporation of Carers' needs into planning of seminars and information sessions	Annually
2. Ensuring responsive and appropriate supports are delivered by having the Carers needs at the centre of all planning and service delivery	2.1 Ensuring Carers continue to have an effective voice in planning, delivering and reviewing WCCSG supports and services	Board Staff	2.1 Carer representation on Board continues 2.1 Carers feedback	Annually On-going
	2.2 Increase the participation of Carers in developing and delivering the services of WCCSG	Staff Board Policies Subgroup	2.2 Identify service areas where Carer volunteers required and discuss feasibility 2.2 Volunteering policies developed 2.2 Database of Carers who are interested in volunteering developed 2.2 Training programme to support voluntarism developed 2.2 Increase in service provision through effective volunteering program	2014 (Q 3) 2015 2015 2015 2016

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
3. Reach more Carers	3.1 Develop new strategies to better engage with and support “hard-to-reach” Carers, including hidden Carers, male Carers, young Carers, Carers of persons with mental health issues etc. (Services publicised to the whole population in a way which attempts to reach people who have never associated themselves with the title of Carer)	Publicity officer Coordinator	3.1 Publicity campaigns to encourage Carers to self identify 3.1 Ten % growth in the number of WCCSG members per year	Carers of persons with: Intellectual disability plus male Carers in 2014 Physical/sensory disability plus young Carers in 2015 Mental ill health 2016 Older persons 2017 Alzheimer’s Disease/ Dementia 2018
	3.2 Encourage Carers to promote WCCSG among Carers who are not members	Staff	3.2 Ten % growth in the number of WCCSG members per year	2015
	3.3 Expand the number of male Carers engaging with the innovative male Carers programme and encourage integration into mainstream services	Staff	3.3 Five % Increase in the number of male Carers accessing services per year	Annually
	3.4 Progress work aimed at targeted supports for Young Carers	Board Staff Young Carers working group Policies Subgroup	3.4 Young Carers working group established 3.4 Additional staff recruited through (CE, Tus/JobBridge) 3.4 Action plan prepared 3.4 Guidelines/policies developed 3.4 Scoping exercise to establish numbers and needs of young Carers completed 3.4 No. of Young Carers reached/supported	May 2014 July 2014 Sept. 2014 Nov. 2014 2015 2016

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
4. The promotion of Carers health and well-being is intensified	4.1 Expand range of Physical, Emotional and Mental Health supports for Carers	Staff HSE Health Promotion Unit	4.1 Action plan of initiatives to improve Carers mental, emotional and physical health and well being 4.1 Initiatives to improve the health and well-being of Carers progressed, subject to funding/resources	2014 Annually
	4.2 Promote healthier lifestyles for Carers by strengthening measures to support and promote physical exercise and good diet	Publicity officer Coordinator Staff	4.2 Media campaign to promote Carers health & well being events 4.2 Ensure that information and activities are available to all Carers 4.2 Increased level of participation by Carers in physical recreation activities	2015 Annually Annually
	4.3 Increase initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles and address risk factors associated with poor health e.g. cancer, diabetes, obesity	Staff Primary Care Team HSE	4.3 Enhanced health promotion strategies through published articles in newsletter etc. & events 4.3 Health check opportunities in at least 2 locations per year	Annually Annually
	4.4 Expand information provision on emotional and mental health wellbeing and supports for Carers	Publicity officer Coordinator Staff	4.4 Awareness campaign in relation to emotional and mental health issues among Carers 4.4 Promotion of supports available including counselling services	2015 2015

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
5. To provide Carers respite breaks in innovative and personalised ways	5.1 Review of WCCSG current Respite Grants will be undertaken	Board Policies subgroup	5.1 Review undertaken	2015
	5.2 Explore further funding possibilities for respite options that allow Carers to take breaks	Coordinator Board	5.2 Funding secured and Increased respite opportunities offered	Annually
6. Information provision about services, benefits and entitlements is enhanced	6.1 Promote awareness of services, benefits and entitlements via publicity campaigns, WCCSG newsletter, Facebook, email, etc.	Publicity Officer Staff	6.1 Use of media and alternative communication channels maximised	Annually
	6.2 Provide benefits and information sessions and promote support with application processes	WCCSG CIS	6.2 CIS invited to promote benefits & entitlements at 3 events each year	Annually
	6.3 Utilise, and pilot new, IT methods that can deliver information/support to more Carers in their own homes, which may include email, Skype, Facebook, Apps etc.	Staff	6.3 Increase in number of Carers receiving email 6.3 No. of times Carers have used email to access support 6.3 Increase in number of information items delivered to Carers via email, Facebook etc. 6.3 Funding sought to develop Carers App 6.3 App Developed	Annually 2014 2015
	6.4 Development of Carers information pack	WCCSG CIS	6.4 Carers information pack launched	March 2014
	6.5 Development of WCCSG's Newsletter & ensure easy local access to newsletter in a number of settings	WCCSG HSE	6.5 Increased funding sought and newsletter developed 6.5 Review of newsletter distribution	April 2014 March 2014

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
7. To present Carers with training opportunities and emergency planning initiatives	7.1 Continue to develop our training programme to increase skills of Carers	Staff	7.1 Carers Feedback	Annually
	7.2 Conduct a survey of Carers training needs	Staff	7.2 Carers additional training needs identified	2015
		HSE	7.2 Develop additional training initiatives as funding permits	2016
	7.3 Development of Carers Guide	Board, Staff	7.3 Carers Guide launched	March 2014
7.4 Development of Carers Emergency Card	Board, Staff	7.4 Carers Emergency Card launched	March 2014	

Goal three: To positively influence policy and practice

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
1. Identify opportunities to influence government policies, practice and culture to be more inclusive of Carer needs and issues	1.1 Continue to present national submissions on topics of relevance to Carers based on research and consultation with Carers	Coordinator	1.1 Number of national submissions presented	Annually
	1.2 Develop links with relevant regional and national networks with regard to advocating that Carers' needs are considered in the development of any policies that may affect them	Coordinator Board	1.2 Evidence of links developed	Annually
	1.3 Encourage direct input from Carers into policy development and research	Staff	1.3 Quantitative monitoring of Carer input	Annually
2. Work with the national network of Carer organisations to progress national Carers' issues	2.1 To raise the issues impacting on Carers as extensively and effectively as possible in order to raise awareness and bring about effective change in policies, procedures and practice to benefit of Carers	Coordinator National Carer organisations	2.1 Interaction with national Carer organisations	Annually
3. Promote the benefits of Carer representation and advocate for extended representation in general	3.1 To seek representation on Bodies who impact on Carer Issues and to influence such Bodies positively for the benefit of Carers	Board Staff	3.1 Use our position on relevant committees and bodies to raise the profile of Carers and represent Carers' issues	On-going

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
4. Work with the Carers Issues Forum (CIF)* to raise the profile of Carers and promote Carers issues	4.1 Actively participate in the CIF and support it to fulfil its important role	Board Subgroup Coordinator	4.1 Attendance and participation	3-4 Meetings per year
	4.2 To further promote the CIF as an identified and highly effective mechanism whereby Carers issues can be heard, quantified and progressed in a manner, which is inclusive, transparent and respectful to all those involved	Coordinator	4.2 CIF promoted to Carers	2015
	4.3 Develop a comprehensive list of agenda items based on input from Carers for consideration by the CIF	Board	4.3 List of Agenda items developed and submitted to CIF Chairperson	3-4 Meetings per year

***The Carers Issues Forum** is a multi-agency partnership, chaired by the HSE Community Work Department, which aims to address broader policy issues of concern to Carers.

Several issues emerged during the consultation process conducted in 2013 which need to be considered by the Carers Issues Forum:

1. **Review the effectiveness of the Carers Issues Forum** in terms of the composition of its membership, clarification of roles, number of meetings held, issues addressed and attendance level at meetings. The Carers Issue Forum needs to work in a planned and regular fashion so that existing relationships and understandings can be further enhanced and collective initiatives encouraged.
2. **Expanding the membership of the Forum**, outside of the existing partners, where the Organisation deems this will assist in achieving our goals.
3. **Upgrade the status of the home help service** to reflect the personal care work undertaken. Additional training on specific illnesses such as Alzheimer's illness should be made available.
4. **Carers Allowance:** Campaign for the removal of means-testing for Carer's Allowance.
5. **Shared Training:** Identify scope for "shared training" between organisations that are concerned with Carers and funded by the HSE.
6. **Discretionary Nature of Items Available:** Items such as grab rails, sliding sheet, bed and hoist available from the state should be listed. Eligibility criteria also need to be made available and HSE personnel such as public health nurses should actively make Carers aware of these items.
7. **24-Hour Helpline.** The feasibility of establishing a 24-hour telephone helpline, similar to the Samaritans should be investigated.
8. **Volunteering Sitting Service:** There is need to document the volunteering services, if any, which are available from organisations working with Carers in West Cork. A feasibility study of establishing a volunteer-sitting service should be undertaken.
9. **Mainstreaming Needs of Carers:** The needs of Carers and families of Carers coping with complex illnesses need to be inserted into care plans of patients. They also need to be integrated into service planning and decision making processes of the HSE and Carers' needs should become a routine part of training of primary care teams.
10. **Training for Carers at the Early Stages of Illness:** When a person first starts caring for a person with complex needs there is need for intensive home-based training from the medical professionals on how to cope with the illness. Many Carers need advice on specific problems, training in medications and training on how to cope with difficult behaviour. Ideally there should be a care plan for the patient and the needs of the Carer should be inserted into this plan.

Goal four: Building the Organisational Capacity of the WCCSG

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
1. Develop and implement effective policies and procedures	1.1 Continue to review and implement existing policies and develop new policies that will assist the organisation	Policies subgroup	1.1 Policy folder updated & all legal and contractual requirements are met	Annually
	1.2 Develop a Board induction policy	Policies subgroup	1.2 Board induction policy completed	2014
	1.3 Complete the Board handbook	Policies subgroup	1.3 Board handbook completed	2014
2. Maintain and regularly evaluate WCCSG's governance structure and board processes	2.1 Continue to ensure that WCCSG's board of management is Carer-led	Board	2.1 Carer Board representation maintained at 80%	Annually
	2.2 Maintain and regularly evaluate WCCSG governance structure and board processes	Board	2.2 Review of Articles and Memorandum of Association	(Q3) 2014
			2.2 Governance Code for Charities adopted	2014
			2.2 Monitored compliance with the provisions as laid out in the Articles of Association and the Charitable Status Act	Annually
	2.3 Ensure that the Board of management is up to date with best management practices	WCCSG Board	2.3 Board skills audit undertaken and individual and collective Board training needs identified	Annually
	2.4 Provide relevant Board training and support	WCCSG Board	2.4 Hours of Board training delivered	As required
	2.5 Hold regular Board meetings with full, constructive participation by all members	WCCSG Board	2.5 Attendance monitoring	Annually
2.5 Board ground rules reviewed			Annually (Q4)	
2.6 Promote Board members to take up representation on external boards to increase the efficiency of resources allocation	WCCSG Board	2.6 Representation on external boards by WCCSG Board members with relevant and effective feedback systems in place	2014/15	
2.7 Continue to form working subgroups to improve the efficiency of projects	WCCSG Board and Staff	2.7 Number and effectiveness of subgroups monitored	Annually	

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
3. Maintain the stability of a dedicated and effective staff team	3.1 Promote retention of current staff and positions	Board HSE Policies Subgroup	3.1 Appropriate policy responses developed to meet staff needs 3.1 Staff retention	On-going
	3.2 Design and implementation of a structured staff annual role and pay review system	WCCSG Board HSE	3.2 Staff annual pay review system implemented 3.2 Capital funding sought for incremental pay increases	2014 (Q 3) 2014
	3.3 Continue to appropriately train and support all staff	WCCSG Board	3.3 Investment in staff training & development opportunities	Annually
	3.4 The possibility of employing part-time staff for longer hours or recruitment of additional staff will be examined	WCCSG Board HSE	3.4 Additional hours for part-time staff 3.4 Additional staff recruited	2014
	3.5 The possible role for volunteers in over-seeing the social events programme will be examined	WCCSG Board	<i>See (Goal 2 Objective 2.2)</i>	2014

Objectives	Activities	Responsibility	Progress indicator	Timescale
4.4 Develop and maintain the organisations funding and resources to enable the organisation to grow	4.1 Secure funding/resources based on increasing Carers numbers and programme	WCCSG Board HSE	4.1 Increased funding secured 4.1 Funding allocation for current year agreed prior year end	Annually
	4.2 Obtain three year funding agreement	Board HSE	4.2 Three year funding agreement obtained	2015
	4.3 Request a review of protocol for HSE funding - delays in finalising the budget, timing etc. needs to be addressed	Board HSE	4.3 Review undertaken	2014
	4.4 Review and renew lease on Bridge Street premises	Board Coordinator	4.4 Rental agreement reviewed and renewed	April 2014
	4.5 Continue to invest in equipment/technology required to allow WCCSG to fulfil its goals	IT Support worker Board HSE Coordinator	4.5 Annual review of equipment/IT 4.5 Replacement of equipment required (subject to funding)	Annually (Q3)

Monitoring and Review of the Plan

WCCSG is committed to self-evaluation in order to review our progress towards meeting the goals and objectives of this five year plan and to ensure that we are in touch with the changing needs of Carers.

An information/education session will be undertaken for all committee members and staff on the strategies goals and objectives.

WCCSG will use this strategic plan as a basis for developing an annual work plan.

We will undertake an on-going process of self-evaluation to review the progress of the implementation of this strategic plan with annual reviews, feedback and reports.

There will be a comprehensive review in 2016 to monitor our progress and reset our actions.

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- Members of the Board of Management of The West Cork Carers Support Group (WCCSG)
- WCCSG Health Service Executive (HSE) Committee Members
- West Cork Carers Support Group Staff members
- The stakeholder organisations that replied to the consultation survey

References

ⁱ Kelleher, “West Cork Carers Support Group: Consultation With Carers” (November 2013)

ⁱⁱ Kelleher, “West Cork Carers Support Group: Consultation With Carers” (November 2013)

ⁱⁱⁱ Kelleher, “West Cork Carers Support Group: Consultation With Carers” (November 2013)