



Business and Human Rights – DFAT Call for Input

Caring for Carers Ireland is a national non-governmental organisation which promotes the health, wellbeing and quality of life of Family Carers and those for whom they care, by promoting Recognition of the role of the Family Carer, providing Respite Care, Information, Telecare support, Training, Nurse Led Carers Clinic, Practical Support and Advocacy to promote Social Inclusion, within the context of the Carers Charter (1991).

Family Carers are people who care on a full or part time basis for a spouse, relative, or friend who is unable to care for themselves at home due to ill health, disability or other long lasting health or care need.

Caring for Carers Ireland warmly welcome this initiative and appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the DFAT National Plan on Business and Human Rights.

The title of Carer and Family Carer are frequently confused. Carer is a general term used to describe caring by all including professional paid care workers, home helps, volunteers and Family Carers.

Amongst all of this, the unique and distinct role of the Family Carer is blurred and obscured, which makes it increasingly difficult for Family Carers voice to be heard and for their needs to be recognised and addressed.

Family Carers provide a unique and dedicated service to their families and communities. They have the right to be recognised and respected for their important contribution to society. Family Carers generally have an emotional relationship and ongoing responsibility for the person for whom they are caring. They undertake responsibility for administering the care and management of health, social and welfare services to their loved one over time and in many cases for year Whether caring for a child or a parent with a disability or illness or an elderly family member, Family Carers through their selfless hard work, knowledge and compassion enhance the quality of life of thousands on a daily basis. For some, a lack of recognition and respect of their work can lead to a sense of disconnection from society and from opportunities that people take for granted.

Patrons: Prof. Joyce O'Connor, Anna Casey

Directors: Judith Ironside, Eilish Smith, Tess Hogan, Mary Savage, Noel P. Power, Jimmy Duggan, Antoinette Greene, Cora Long.
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It is critical that the needs of Family Carers are articulated to those with responsibility for the development of policies that directly or indirectly impact on their lives and those for whom they care. Family Carers who choose to care, should be empowered to do so without detriment to their inclusion in society and to their health and wellbeing.

The labour market has changed considerably over the past number of years, moving towards more flexibility both in terms of working time and work organisation. In addition, female participation rates have increased sharply, they tend to fall where women have childcare or other types of caring responsibilities. This makes the labour market of today a very different world to that of 50 years ago.

The reconciliation of work, family and private life is a core issue for EU employment and health and well-being policy. Helping workers to achieve a better work–life balance and to balance the demands of a job with caring responsibilities will help to increase labour market participation rates for all workers (particularly for women) in line with employment policy.

Part-time working is frequently taken up as an option by many women as a way of combining work with caring responsibilities. Be it caring for young children or ageing parents in their own home.

Reconciliation of work, family and private life is set to be an ongoing challenge. In addition to the likely increasing responsibility for care that will take place as a result of the ageing population, individuals expect more flexibility and work–life balance in their lives in general, in contrast to previous working generations. These trends will ensure that work–life balance issues remain a high-profile topic over the coming years.

To quote from the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights part 11 a 12 Commentary

“Depending on circumstances, business enterprises may need to consider additional standards. For instance, enterprises should respect the human rights of individuals belonging to specific groups or populations that require particular attention, where they may have adverse human rights impacts on them. In this connection, United Nations instruments have elaborated further on the rights of indigenous peoples; women; national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities; children; persons with disabilities; and migrant workers and their families”.

To this group may I respectfully suggest that Family Carers be included to ensure that their right to a work-life balance is recognised, supported and protected.

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