

KEY FINDINGS



SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The State of Caring 2026 findings show that family carers continue to face significant financial pressure, inadequate access to services, poor health and wellbeing, loneliness, transport barriers and uncertainty about future care arrangements. These recommendations set out the key actions needed to better recognise, support and sustain family carers.

1. IMPROVE INCOME AND FINANCIAL SECURITY

Abolish the means test for Carer's Allowance and establish a Family Carer Payment Implementation Group to oversee the transition to a new Family Carer Payment.

Increase Carer's Allowance and Carer's Benefit to €325 per week, make carer payments tax-exempt and introduce a Cost of Disability payment.

Extend Fuel Allowance to all Carer's Allowance recipients and introduce targeted supports for caring households with high care-related energy costs.

2. IMPROVE ACCESS TO SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

Provide flexible respite options that meet the needs and preferences of both family carers and the people they support.

Introduce the statutory home support scheme and take urgent action to address the shortage of home care workers.

Reduce waiting lists for Assessments of Need, therapies and specialist services, and provide financial relief for families forced to pay privately.

3. SUPPORT FAMILY CARERS' HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Fully fund the Carer Guarantee to ensure family carers have consistent access to information, training and support regardless of where they live.

Recognise family carers as a distinct at-risk group within national health and wellbeing policy.

4. ADDRESS LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

Fund the National Loneliness Strategy and ensure family carers are explicitly included in its implementation.

Develop targeted supports for family carers experiencing loneliness, including respite, peer support, training, social connection and support to remain in employment where appropriate.

5. IMPROVE TRANSPORT SUPPORTS

Progress the review of the Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Scheme and introduce a replacement scheme that reflects modern disability and mobility needs.

Ensure public transport is accessible, reliable, affordable and usable in practice for disabled people and the family carers who support them.

6. SUPPORT FUTURE PLANNING

Develop structured future planning pathways for family carers and care recipients, covering housing, care arrangements, financial security and decision-making supports.

Ensure future planning is underpinned by guaranteed access to appropriate community-based supports, rather than relying on informal or assumed family succession.