

# Recognising the Value of Care in Ireland



**June 21, 2012**

## *6<sup>th</sup> Annual Carers Week Celebrates Ireland's 247,000 Carers*

Marking 2012 Carers Week, Bluebird Care has acknowledged the work done by Ireland's 247,000 carers.

*"The value of Ireland's carers cannot be overstated,"* says Eddie O'Toole, Operations Director with Bluebird Care.

*"Carers in Ireland provide the equivalent of €2.5 billion in unpaid care every year with this figure projected to grow to over €3 billion by 2021. The figures provided by the Carers Association suggest that in order to manage the current carer to disabled population ratios, Ireland will need an additional 44,829 carers by 2021,"* he says.

Entering the Irish market five years ago, Bluebird Care who now have 18 offices nationwide, use best practice care given their business model was born in the UK where stringent care legislation is in place.

Recognising the value of the home carer, Bluebird Care sees itself as adding significant value to the caring sector. Eddie O'Toole says, *"there's evidence-based research which confirms that disabled, unwell, elderly and rehabilitating individuals recuperate much better at home than in hospital. Ireland has a massive 'caring culture' and the stark figures by the*

*Carer's Association demonstrate the demand for private care, which can help offset the length of stay in Irish hospitals.*

*"Bluebird Care is a nationwide network of expert carers who give daily respite, personal care and support to a growing and ageing population. Given the growth in our population preventative and rehabilitative health care will become even more important," he added.*

The work undertaken by the expert Bluebird Care team means that people of all ages can be assisted to remain in the safety, security and comfort of their own home.

At national level, a senior team oversees strategy, policy and common procedures, however each branch of the company is owner managed so customers receive a tailored local service.

Varying circumstances result in many family carers having to adopt a life-changing role untrained and under-supported, while juggling full-times jobs, families, personal and social commitments.

Bluebird Care Operations Manager Eddie O'Toole says, *"the vital work of the family carer often goes unrecognised and under-supported. Although very rewarding, their caring role is constant and being on 24 hour call can be physically, mentally and emotionally draining. The staff at Bluebird Care work with patients and their families to offer, help, support, relief and even the smallest comforts as having a cup of tea and time-out is invaluable to the family carer."*

*"National Carers Week is a fantastic initiative to celebrate the dedication and commitment of family carers throughout Ireland, a time to acknowledge the great work they do and to say 'Thank You' for being there every day."*

**-ENDS-**

## **Notes to Editors:**

### **About Bluebird Care**

A national organisation, with 18 offices nationwide Bluebird Care serves Limerick, Cork, Tipperary, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Kildare, Laois, Offaly, Kerry, Wicklow, Donegal, Leitrim, Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, Meath, Clare and Dublin.

Specialising in care of older persons; care of adults and children with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities and sensory impairments; child care; dementia care; palliative care, acquired brain injury; spinal injuries; pre & post operative care; live-in care; personal care; respite care; and specialist personal assistants to support rehabilitation and re-

enablement, Bluebird Care offer a wide range of choices to families who really want to have their loved one cared for at home.

More information on [www.bluebirdcare.ie](http://www.bluebirdcare.ie)

### **About National Carers Week**

National Carers Week June 18th-24th, now in its sixth year, is pioneered by Care Alliance Ireland in partnership with eight other leading Irish charities including the Alzheimer Society, The Disability Federation, The Carers Association, Caring for Carers, Bri, MS Ireland, Headway and The Irish Hospice Foundation.

Through a series of 150 national, regional and local events the aim of the week is to recognise and to acknowledge the phenomenal work and commitment of family carers throughout Ireland who spend endless hours every day, every week, every month caring for elderly loved ones, loved ones with disabilities, terminal illnesses and special needs.

Ireland's 274,000 family carers are more often than not immediate family members who have changed their lives to provide very high levels of care to ensure their loved one remains at home and many do not avail of carer support services available.

More information on [www.carersweek.ie](http://www.carersweek.ie)