

Home Care in Ireland: A Cautionary Tale of Policy-Making in the Absence of Implementation Strategies



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BASED ON A PAPER BY SAME TITLE (TIMONEN, DOYLE AND O'DWYER 2010)

Overview



Expansion of formal home care

...in the absence of a national plan / framework /
legislation to guide this expansion

...in tandem with significant policy formulation and
implementation in residential care

=inconsistent implementation, uneven provision and
missed opportunity to lift home care into the realm
of public policy alongside residential care

Home care in 2000



- ‘Implicit familialism’: Reliance on informal carers who remained largely unsupported by State
- Funding prioritised residential care
- Public expenditure on home care 0.19% of GDP
- 3.7% of 65+ received home help

Apparent prioritisation of home care



- **National Health Strategy (2001):**
Access...should be fair. The system must respond to people's needs rather than have access dependent on geographic location or ability to pay.
- **Annual expenditure for homecare increased: €102.3 m in 2001 to €331 m in 2008**
- **National Development Plan (NDP) 2007-2013: €4.7 billion allocated to older people's services**
- **Establishment of the Home Care Support Scheme in 2006 (individually tailored cash-for-care packages of domestic and personal care)**

Outcomes



- Unevenness of provision across country
- Shifting balance between providers, growth of private sector
- Sector currently unregulated

Why these outcomes?



- Liberal welfare state
 - No room for universal entitlements, rights
 - Openness to private provision
- Further reinforced by:
 - Clientelistic nature of Irish politics: discretionary system rather than formal means-based assessments
 - Policy documents merely administrative guidelines, local administrative units not obliged to provide home care.
- *Absence* of media attention
- *Absence* of large, organised provider constituency

Conclusion



- The process of home care formalisation has highlighted serious deficiencies in the State's ability to implement policy
- State is still struggling to shed its subsidiary role and adopt a stronger, more directive role in financing, co-ordinating and regulating home care
- Policy *per se* is not a sufficient condition for achieving key outcomes such as fairness & equity. In the Irish context, legislation and clarification of lines of responsibility are required.