

# An Introduction to



Supporting Parents after Bereavement

# What is Anam Cara?



**An all Ireland organisation  
providing  
online and face to face  
peer support services for  
bereaved parents**

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# The Facts

- **Approximately 2,750 families each year experience the death of a child between ages of 0 – 44 years** (CSO Statistics Ireland/Northern Ireland)
- **Sudden deaths, outside a hospital or hospice system often find themselves outside the reach of any bereavement support**
- **The intense grief can last longer than society realises**

# Bereaved Parents

- The intensity and complexity of the grief after the death of child, of any age
- Anguish & isolation experienced by parents
- Lack of access to information about support services available in the community
- Each family member will grieve in their own unique way

# Supporting Bereaved Parents

**Bereaved parents are among the most vulnerable people in our community, their support is Anam Cara's priority**

*A recent research paper by Colin Murray Parkes highlighted that after a major bereavement, such as the death of a child:*

- Up to a third of the people most directly affected will suffer detrimental effects on their physical or mental health, or both.
- Without appropriate information and support such bereavement increases the risk of death from heart disease and suicide.
- May cause or contribute to a variety of psychosomatic and psychiatric disorders for of bereaved family members.

**Other research in Scotland with bereaved parents confirmed that**

- A bereaved mothers mortality rate is 4 times higher than a non bereaved mother (Mairi Harper)



# Recent Research

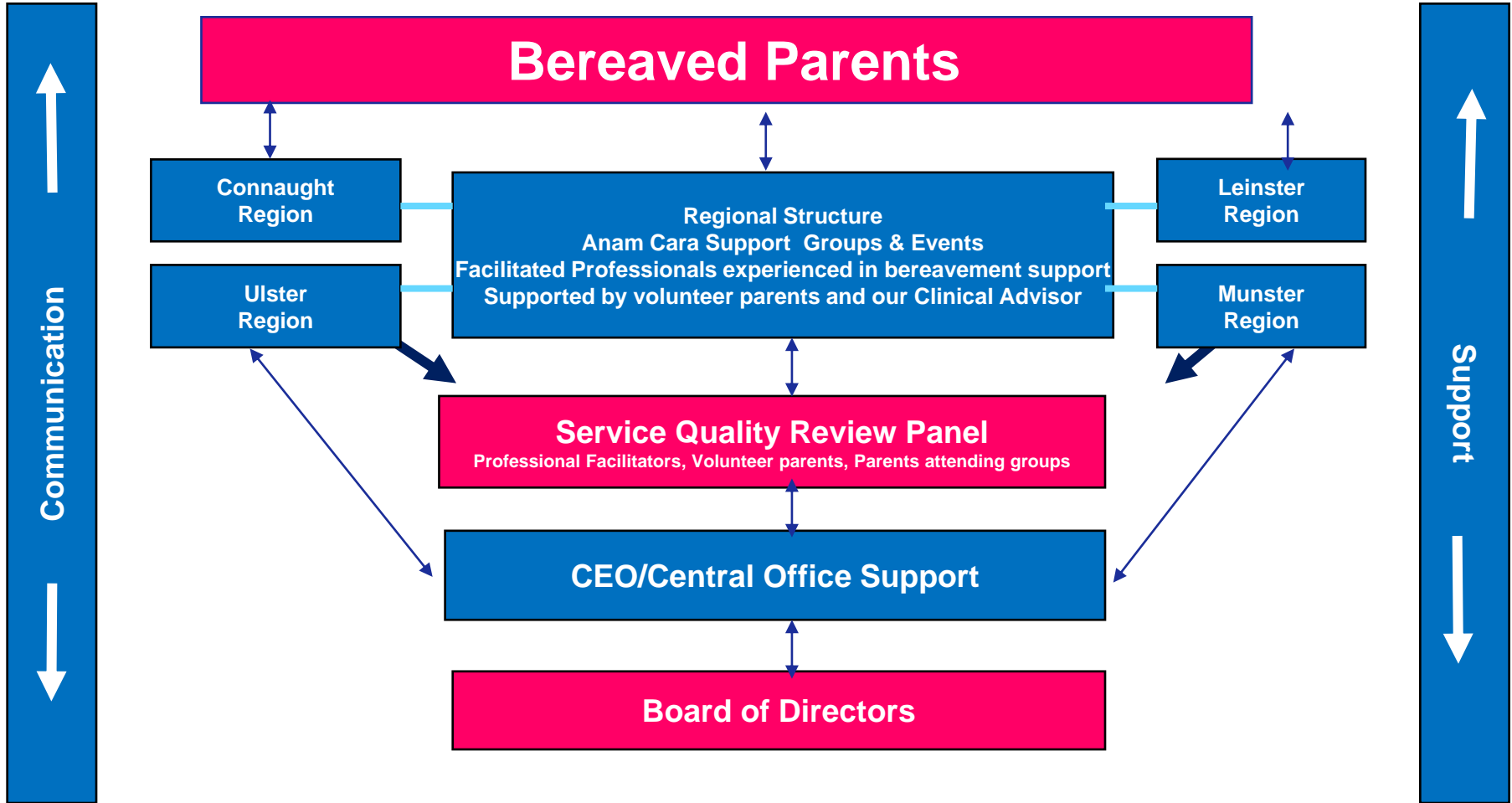
## Parental Grief

- ▶ Early bereavement – up to 3 years
- ▶ Mid bereavement – 3.5 – 4.5 years
- ▶ Late bereavement – up to 30 years

Dr Mairi Harper  
Research Leader, Family Bereavement  
Heriot-Watt University



# Anam Cara Structure



# Anam Cara's Organisations Values

- Quality
- Compassion and Empathy
- Inclusivity
- Trust
- Collaboration



# Our Vision

**“Every family throughout Ireland will have the relevant support services they need following the death of their son or daughter”**



# Our Focus

To provide information and peer support through safe and comfortable online and face to face forums



# Inclusivity

Anam Cara is an inclusive organisation our services are available to

- Any parent or family who have experienced the death of child, regardless of age or circumstances of death.
- Across all communities in Ireland



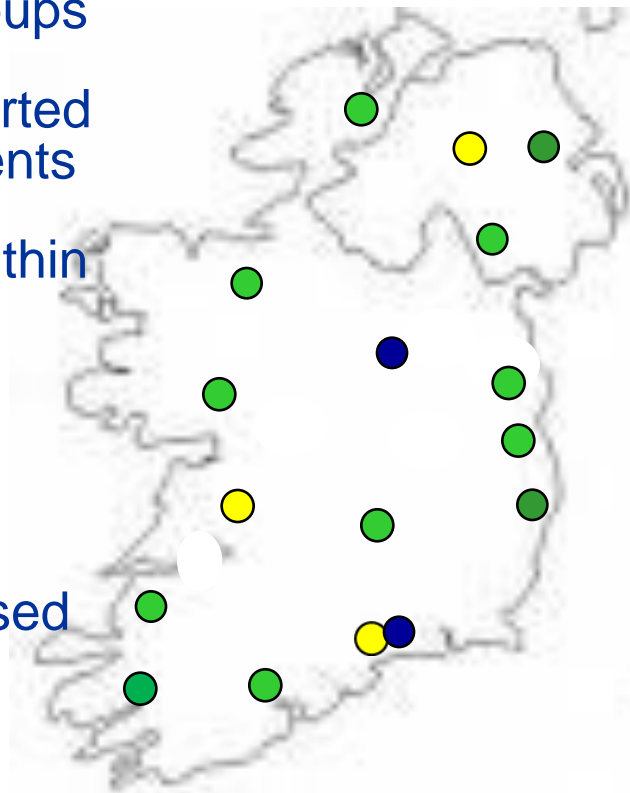
**All Anam Cara Services are provided free of charge**

# Our Impact

- Anam Cara has connected with over 14,000 parents since 2008
- Facilitate about 140+ events each year for parents and families events across the island of Ireland
- Provides an important link to information and additional services in the community
- Currently 12 active support groups and 3 key partnerships – Supported 2,212 Parents in 2019
- All services and support is provided at no cost

# Anam Cara Services

- 12 Monthly informal open Groups
- Professional Facilitator supported by Anam Cara Volunteer parents
- Ideally strategically located within a 100km distance
- Focus on Quality v's Quantity
- **Bereavement Information evenings** and Family Remembrance events organised throughout the year.
- Dedicated **Bereavement Workshops** for Parents with no Surviving Children



## Existing Groups ●

- Dublin South
- Dublin North
- Wicklow
- Donegal
- Tipperary
- Cork City & West Cork
- Mayo
- Galway
- Tralee
- Armagh
- Belfast

## Partnerships ●

- Limerick (Milford)
- Northern Ireland NICH)
- Solas Waterford
- **Target Areas** ●
- Midlands
- Waterford

# Bereavement Events & Resources

- Parents offered Anam Cara Information Packs
- Links to Online Resources including videos
- Access to Bereavement professionals
- Information and links to other services in their Community
- Introduction to their local Anam Cara group and peer support



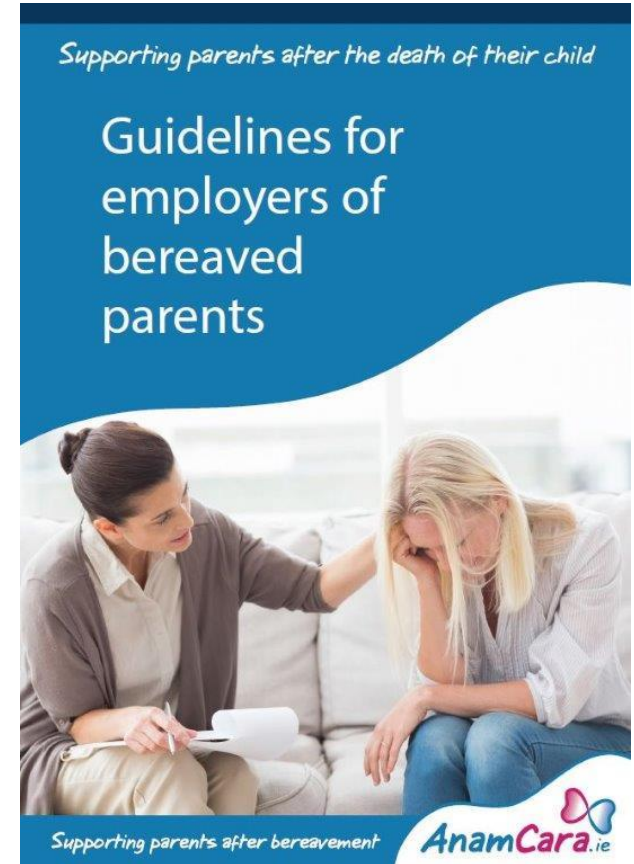
# Peer support.... Is a special kind of support

Ref. Kari Dyregrov & Atle Dyregrov

- Reduces Social Isolation
- Provides a safe place where we can be ourselves
- Recognition, Understand & normalise the intense grief
- Time out for parents– let the mask drop
- Sharing promotes models of surviving
- Provides a structure for information& signposting
- Hope in meeting parents further on
- Continues after family/friends support has waned

# Anam Cara Employers Resource

Developed by bereaved Parents to help employers and work colleagues on how best to support them when they return to work





# Thank You





## Information Telephone Numbers:

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## Address

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