



Hanafin welcomes significant progress in achieving Government poverty reduction target

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin T.D. welcomed the publication today (*3rd December 2008*) of the **EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions** results for 2007 by the CSO.

Minister Hanafin said that the results show that significant progress is being achieved in meeting the Government poverty reduction target set out in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 (NAPinclusion), which is: *"to reduce the number of those experiencing consistent poverty to between 2% and 4% by 2012, with the aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016, under the revised definition."*

Consistent poverty in 2007 was 5.1%, down from 6.5% in 2006. In particular there was a reduction in consistent poverty for lone parents from 33.9% to 20.1%. A related development is the fall in the consistent poverty rate for children from 10.3% to 7.4%. This is evidence of the positive impact of the priority given to alleviating consistent poverty in 2007 from an investment of over €240 million in a range of social welfare measures alone.

Overall 16.5% of the population were 'at risk of poverty' in 2007, compared to 17% in 2006. (The comparable figure was 19.7% in 2003). The CSO figures show that when the 'once off' effect of SSIA's is excluded, the rate of 'at risk of poverty' is 15.8% in 2007, which is a significant reduction from the 2006 figure. The reduction was particularly marked for lone parents for whom 'at risk of poverty' reduced from 45.6% in 2006 to 37.6% in 2007.



Minister Hanafin said **“the continuing decline in the poverty rates in 2007 demonstrate the success of the Government’s commitment to combating poverty and building an inclusive society. This commitment is continuing in the ten year National Action Plan for Social Inclusion and in the National Development Plan, both of which commenced in 2007. The strategic approach in these plans is designed to enhance the progress which has already been made up to 2007.”**

Minister Hanafin went on to say **“the best route out of poverty is through quality, sustainable employment. This remains an overriding priority, although the current economic situation will make it difficult to achieve significant progress in the immediate future. The Government has prioritised delivering real increases in social welfare payments.**

Next year basic rates of social welfare payments are being increased by between 3% and 3.8%, ahead of the projected rate of inflation for 2009. The findings of the EU-SILC survey will greatly assist in identifying where policies and resources should be prioritised to ensure that the most vulnerable are protected. Full account of the results of this survey will be fully taken into account in developing future policy for reducing poverty and social exclusion.”

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