



Minister Hoctor launches new National Money Advice and Budgeting Service Helpline

Máire Hoctor TD, Minister of State with Responsibility for Older People, this afternoon (Thursday 4 October 2007) launched the Money Advice and Budgeting Service's (MABS) new lo-call telephone number, 1890 283438. The aim of this national Helpline is to provide greater ease of access to MABS support for those experiencing debt problems. The Helpline, which operates Monday to Friday from 9:am to 8:pm offers a confidential support service in conjunction with existing MABS services.

MABS, set up initially as a pilot in 1992, has developed into 53 MABS companies now providing a debt advice service in 65 locations throughout the country. The Department of Social and Family Affairs provided €17.6 million to fund MABS in 2007.

Speaking in Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 where the MABS Helpline phone-bank is based at the Westend Retail Village, Minister Hoctor said that over the past 15 years, MABS has developed into a; "valuable nationwide support service which has assisted thousands of people help regain control of their finances".

The Minister said: "The issues that give rise to debt problems are complex. Research shows that lack of information about money management contributes to the difficulties that people on low incomes encounter. It is my view that the Money Advice and Budgeting Service has a distinct role in providing information and addressing the need for money management education in local communities". Minister Hoctor added: "Money advisers encounter first hand the human face of serious debt situations. The impact of debt on people and families can be extremely stressful with loss of dignity and self esteem. The MABS service



Department of Social and Family Affairs

is reaching out to people in debt, or in danger of sliding into debt, and helping them adjust and manage their budgets”.

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service can be accessed in three ways: through frontline offices around the country which provide a face to face service; the MABS website www.mabs.ie which offers an online money management facility and the new MABS national Helpline 1890 283438 (or 1890 BUDGET) launched today, which aims to provide ease of access to MABS support for those experiencing debt problems.

Minister Máire Hocht said that in line with the *Programme for Government*, Martin Cullen TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs is developing proposals for a new structure for MABS designed to meet the needs of people with debt difficulties in today’s society. His proposals she said; “will build on the best features of the MABS model of service to the public”, and will involve the “continuation of local voluntary involvement in the MABS service along with national leadership which will ensure the continuation of a high quality coordinated budgeting and advice service providing confidential support for its clients”.

Minister Hocht concluded: ‘The Government recognises the critically important contribution that the MABS service makes to combating disadvantage and reaching out to the vulnerable and marginalized.

Editor’s note

MABS

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a countrywide service funded by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. It is managed by 53 locally-based companies with board members drawn from the statutory and voluntary sectors.



Department of Social and Family Affairs

MABS provides an independent, free and confidential service primarily to low-income families who are in debt or at risk of getting into debt.

MABS National Development Limited

MABS NDL was established in 2004 to support and develop the services of the 53 MABS services throughout the country. It provides support to the MABS service and the Helpline team.

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Press Release Ends