



Department of Social and Family Affairs

New Premises For Clare MABS Opened - Mary Coughlan, Minister For Social And Family Affairs

Mary Coughlan, Minister for Social and Family Affairs today announced the official opening of the new premises for Clare Money Advice and Budgeting Service in Ennis, Co Clare.

Clare MABS was one of five original pilot projects set up in 1992 to combat the problem faced by people who borrow from moneylenders.

"It is indeed cause for celebration that the MABS is now a countywide service with 52 centres and a budget allocation close to 10 million," Minister Coughlan said today.

"The success of MABS reflects the energy and commitment of those involved, many of whom contribute selflessly on a voluntary basis," the Minister added.

The aim of the MABS is to help those who have budgeting problems to regain control of their finances and in time of need, to gain access to affordable credit.

"More and more people are becoming aware of MABS. They recognise the value of the service it offers and they realise it is there to help them," the Minister said.

ENDS

November 6th 2003

NOTE FOR EDITORS

Background

The Department of Social and Family Affairs has been directly involved in activities to combat money lending since the publication in 1988 of a report by the Combat Poverty Agency entitled 'Moneylending and Low Income Families'.

In 1992 five pilot projects were set up, located in Limerick City, Waterford City, Cork City, Dublin City and West Clare. Since then the number of MABS has grown to 52 with 120 people providing advice and 60 back-up administrative staff.

Local projects operate as partnerships of all relevant agencies. Each local MABS is run by a management committee drawn from local voluntary and statutory services and community groups. They are independent information and advice providers, rooted in the local community.

Cómhairle provide a Training and Support Unit for money advisors and Management Committees of the MABS projects.

Future of the service

The MABS service is now fully available throughout the State. Priority issues for the future are the need to strengthen the community sector's involvement in local projects and enhancement of the preventative and educational work of local projects, to complement the core one-to-one advisory service offered by MABS.