



Launch of Family Support Agency and Directory marks UN International Day of the Family –

Mary Coughlan Minister of Social and Family Affairs

Mary Coughlan T.D., Minister for Social and Family Affairs, today marked the UN International Day of Families by formally launching the Family Support Agency and the “Support for Families Directory”.

The Family Support Agency’s main task is to protect the family, by supporting the stability of family life and addressing the effects of changing family formation.

The Family Support Agency will support families, promote the continuity of stability in family life, prevent marital breakdown and foster a supportive community environment for families at a local level.

The “Support for Families Directory” is a joint initiative between Minister Coughlan’s Department and the Family Support Agency which it funds. The comprehensive guide has almost 400 entries detailing voluntary and community groups providing marriage, child and bereavement counselling and support.

The “Support for Families” directory will provide a handy reference, set out on a county by county basis, of a range of services and supports for families.

“Many valuable services are available to support families, for both problem times and more routine needs for information. However, I would be concerned that unless citizens are aware of these services, opportunities will be lost, help may not be accessed and services remain unused,” said Minister Coughlan.



“I am delighted to today formally launch the Family Support Agency today, the United Nations International Day of the Family.

”The Family Support Agency will provide top quality supports and services for families in Ireland, ranging from family mediation, promoting the development of marriage and relationship counselling, supporting, promoting and developing the Family and Community Services resource centres which I am pleased to say has grown in number over the last six years from ten to 85 centres, and undertaking or commissioning research into matters related to the FSA’s function.

The provision of the “Support for Families Directory”, a guide to local voluntary and community groups throughout the country will provide useful information to the large range of services available for families, “said Minister Coughlan.

“This publication marks a further step forward in improved information services for families, an important objective of the Government’s families first approach, “added Minister Coughlan.

The FSA will provide a family mediation service, develop marriage and relationship counselling, undertake research and advise the Minister on family issues and will work in partnership with the community and voluntary sector. The Family Support Agency has been allocated a budget of €17.2m for 2003.

ENDS
15th May, 2003

SEE FACT SHEET ATTACHED



Notes for News Editor

The Family Support Agency will:

- Provide a family mediation service to help couples, who have decided to separate, negotiate their separation without acrimony. Over the last six years this service has expanded from two centres in Dublin and Limerick to 12 centres through out the country. This figure will increase to 14 by the end of this year.
- Support, promote and develop the provision of marriage and relationship counselling and other family support services. Government support for voluntary sector counselling has increased six-fold since 1997. There are now over 470 voluntary and community groups providing this service.
- Support, promote and develop the Family and Community Services Resource Centres programme. The number of centres has increased from 10 to over 85 since 1997.
- Provide and disseminate information about these services and other family issues, and
- Provide financial assistance to voluntary organizations for these purposes.
- Undertake or commission research into matters related to its functions.

International Day of Families

“The International Day of Families is being observed for the eighth time on 15 May 2003. Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 47/237 of 20 September 1993, this annual observance reflects the importance, which the international community attaches to families regarding their situation around the world.” – copyright www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/