



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Social Affairs Minister Opens New Citizen Information Office For Dublin's Northside

New Facility Links To Other Agencies To Provide A One-Stop-Shop To Customers

The Minister for Social Affairs, Séamus Brennan T.D., today in Dublin officially opened new offices for the Northside Citizens Information Service (CIS), which offers services to over 74,000 people.

The new offices are located in the Northside Civic Centre in Coolock and include a new Citizens Information point on the ground floor that allows the public easy access to and information on the range of information and support services available.

Last year the Northside CIS dealt with over 10,000 queries from the public on issues such as social welfare payments, health services, legal advice and employment rights.

The centre's catchment area was revised last year and now serves approximately 74,758 people, including all or part of Artane, Beaumont, Bonnybrook, Coolock, Darndale, Drumcondra, Donnycarney, Gracepark, Kilmore, Priorswood, Santry and Whitehall.

Speaking at the opening, Minister Brennan said that the new facility will interact with other agencies, including the Department of Social Affairs, Health Board, FÁS, Dublin City Council and Coolock Community Law Centre to provide a one-stop-shop to the different services.

"While there is an onus on every Government Department and Agency to inform and assist the public, it is equally important that people have a choice at local level and have expertise available outside the statutory sector to which they can turn when information and advice is required. It is not a reflection on the statutory services that people often prefer to seek information from another source, or perhaps to check things out before or after contacting a Government Department.

The staff and volunteers of the CIS can provide an advocacy service which acts as a direct link between the client and one or more Government Departments and the fact that many of the services are now housed here together is an added bonus for everyone".

Minister Brennan said those working in the CIS were in a unique position to influence social policy because of their contact with so many people who avail of the service.

"It is through initiatives like this that you can influence all of us politicians and let us know when important issues are arising. You can act as a conduit between the statutory bodies and the members of the public who seek your help".

The Minister also acknowledged the work done by Outreach services provided through the CIS and the work done by the many volunteers who support the service.
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