



PRESS RELEASE

14/11/08

**Hundreds of Mullingar people benefit from advice from
CIC and MABS**

**Minister Hanafin meets staff and volunteers
providing service in Mullingar**

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs, **Mary Hanafin T.D.** today (*14th November 2008*) visited the Mullingar Citizens Information Centre (CIC) which, together with the Athlone CIC makes up the County Westmeath Citizens Information Service. Minister Hanafin also visited the Mullingar Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

Meeting staff and volunteers at the Mullingar Citizens Information Centre Minister Hanafin said, "**the development of Mullingar CIC since its establishment in 1979 is remarkable and is a sign of the dedication of all the volunteers over the years. It began as an individual organisation reaching out to provide information on entitlements to the people of Mullingar. Since then it has joined forces with the Athlone CIC to become the Westmeath Citizens Information Service and between them they now operate an extra two outreach services. In the past year over 24,000 queries and almost 15,000 personal callers have been dealt with. This is an indication of the need for such a comprehensive and trusted information source in the area.**"



Department of Social and Family Affairs

The Citizens Information Centres provide free independent information and advice in relation to health, social welfare, housing, taxation, consumer matters, employment rights, careers and local information. The Westmeath Citizens Information Service is also engaged in other projects including information nights, the creation of a Local Information Database Directory for all information services in Westmeath and pension seminars.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs is providing over €30 million to fund Citizens Information services around Ireland in 2008.

Later in the day while visiting the Mullingar MABS office, Minister Hanafin praised the invaluable advice and guidance that they offer to their customers at a time in their lives when they may feel overwhelmed by the situation they find themselves in. **“Particularly at this time of year, with Christmas fast approaching, the importance of planning ahead to manage Christmas expenses, as well as regular bills which follow in the New Year is vital. The budgeting service that MABS provides can offer a sense of reassurance and comfort for people who may feel under pressure by possible debt they may find themselves in after the Christmas period.”**

MABS are funded by the Department of Social & Family Affairs and have offices in 65 locations throughout the country. The National MABS Helpline is available on **1890 283 438** (for the price of a local call) to take calls from members of the public seeking help and advice or on their website at www.mabs.ie.

ENDS



Note for Editors:

Citizens Information Centre

The Citizens Information Board (formerly Comhairle) is responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a wide range of social and civil services through:

- The web-based information sources www.citizensinformation.ie
- The Citizens Information Phone Service, a low call service available Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-9p.m. 1890777121
- The face to face services, the network of Citizens Information Services (CIS) nationwide offering information and advocacy services to the public. Contact information for the network of offices is available at www.citizensinformation.ie

Opening hours in:

Mullingar CIC: Monday to Friday 9.30am – 5.00pm

Athlone CIC: Monday to Friday 9.30am – 5.00pm

Contact details are as follows:

Mullingar: Market House
Market Square
Mullingar
Co. Westmeath

Telephone: 044 934 0700

Email: mullingar@citinfo.ie



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Athlone: St. Mary's Square
Athlone
Co. Westmeath

Telephone: 090 647 8851

Email: athlone@citinfo.ie

Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

MABS is a national, free, confidential and independent service for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt.

Opening hours:

Monday to Thursday 9.00am to 5.00pm

Friday 9.00am to 1.00pm

Contact details are as follows:

2 College Street

Mullingar

Co. Westmeath

Telephone: 044 9340871

Email: Mullingar@mabs.ie