



**BLUEPRINT FOR BETTER PUBLIC SERVICE LAUNCHED
BY MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AND FAMILY AFFAIRS MARY
COUGHLAN**

A blueprint for the provision of future information and customer response for the Department of Social and Family Affairs was launched by Minister Mary Coughlan today.

The Information Services strategy – *the first such government department strategy* – aims to ensure a fast and accurate response to queries from the public about social welfare entitlements.

The scale of interaction by the Department with the public can be gauged by the fact that tens of thousands of phone calls are made to the Department’s help lines every week – and each week over 903, 000 people receive a payment from the Department.

”There is a commitment at managerial level to provide support in achieving the aims of this strategy, and that support will continue and will develop as the strategy is implemented stage by stage, “ said Minister Mary Coughlan today.

The Minister was addressing over 200 frontline information staff from Social Welfare offices around the country at the launch of the



strategy in Dublin today.

Minister Coughlan said that the social welfare code was varied and complex and posed “a particular challenge to the effective delivery of information to members of the public and others involved in the dissemination of information on Departmental schemes and services”.

“Because you are dealing with so many individuals – each with their own individual problems, needs and circumstances, it is vital that this Department’s response to an information need is tailored, accurate and the best possible service that can be provided.”

“The payment sought by citizen’s under the welfare code are theirs by right if they meet the qualifying criteria. So there is an obligation on Departmental information providers to ensure a fast and accurate response to queries.”

“This Information Services Strategy is a significant document. It sets out the future for information services in the Department and a reasoned argument for change and improvement. It addresses the



problems and sets out a blueprint for the future, “ said Minister Coughlan.

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