



**An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection**

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**Ó Cuív - Distribution of some 3 million Public Services Cards
to begin in coming months**

Approximately three million Public Services Cards will begin to issue in the coming months to people over 16 years of age who can access public services Minister Ó Cuív said today (1 February 2011).

“The Public Services Card will ensure that people can access public services across a number of channels, including online, via telephone or in person at a public office, with a minimum of duplication while preserving their privacy to the maximum extent possible,” said the Minister. “The Public Services Card will replace cards currently in use, such as the Social Services Card and the Free Travel card, with highly secure cards,” he added.

The Public Services Card will include security features such as laser engraving personalisation, (similar to that used in the Irish passport), a contact chip, a signature, photograph and an expiry date.

It is expected that in the region of three million Public Services Cards will be issued to people over 16 years of age who are capable of accessing public services in their own right. Issue of the Card will involve a registration process which will include the collection of a photograph and signature.

Minister Ó Cuív said: “The facilities for the production and issue of the Public Services Card are now in place and undergoing final testing. The first test cards were produced to schedule in December last. As Minister for Social Protection, I am committed to having the cards issued as soon as possible.”

The Minister added that: “Features such as photographs and signatures and electronic card authentication are expected to minimise the rate of fraud and



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error arising from incorrectly identified and authenticated individuals. A further benefit of the Public Services Card will be the efficiencies that can be achieved by all agencies and customers using the card. The time spent on establishing identity and authentication will be reduced on both sides, leading to significant potential savings nationally.”

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