



55,000 Carers to receive Respite Care Grant this week

Over €110million being spent to provide respite for Carers – Hanafin

Some 55,000 Carers are due to receive the Respite Care Grant this week. This grant of €1,700 is available to all carers providing full-time care and attention to an older person or a person with disability, regardless of their means or social insurance contributions.

Mary Hanafin TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs said that **“this payment helps Carers to get respite care for their loved one or can be used to take them on a break. This payment is made in the first week of June each year, since it was introduced by the Government in 1999. It can be used in whatever way the Carer wants and so gives them great flexibility.**”

The Government is fully committed to supporting carers and we maintained income supports for all carers in the recent Budget. A break from caring is one of the greatest needs identified by family carers. The Respite Care Grant provides a significant contribution to enable carers to get a much deserved break which can benefit them as well as their family members.”

Minister Hanafin continued **“this year the grant will benefit almost 55,000 carers. More than 48,200 people in receipt of the Carer's Allowance and Carer's Benefit schemes will receive the Grant along with approximately 6,500 additional full-time carers who are not in receipt of one of these payments. The estimated cost of the scheme in 2009 is over €112.2 million.”**

Carers who are providing full-time care for more than one person may be entitled to €1,700 in respect of each person that they are caring for. For example, a person giving full-time care to two people with disabilities will be entitled to €3,400.



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Minister Hanafin said the Government is acutely aware of the sacrifices made by carers and has sought to make many improvements in services and supports for carers. **“Over the past decade, weekly payment rates to carers have greatly increased, qualifying conditions for Carer’s Allowance have significantly eased, coverage of the scheme has been extended and new schemes such as half-rate Carer’s Allowance and Carer’s Benefit have been introduced and extended. The combined expenditure on Carer’s Allowance, Carer’s Benefit and the Respite Care Grant is expected to be in the region of €650 million in 2009.”**

ENDS

Editors Note:

The annual Respite Care Grant was first introduced in June 1999 at the rate of €254 in recognition of the importance of respite to carers. It has been increased each year since then, rising to the current rate of €1,700.

In 2005, the Respite Care Grant was improved in a number of ways:

- It was extended to all full time Carers, regardless of means [or social insurance contribution record] but subject to certain other conditions and
- The grant could now be paid in respect of each care recipient to recognise the particular challenges which are faced by carers who are caring for more than one person.

Further information on the Respite Care Grant is available:

- from Respite Care Grant Section, Department of Social and Family Affairs, Landen House, Townsend Street, Dublin 2,
- at – www.welfare.ie,
- from all Social Welfare Offices and–
- at LoCall 1890 66 22 44 (from the Republic of Ireland only) 9.30 a.m.– to 5.00 p.m. Monday To Friday