



## **Department of Social and Family Affairs**

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### **€111.6 Million Saved By Anti-Fraud Measures – Mary Coughlan TD Minister For Social And Family Affairs**

Mary Coughlan TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs today announced that her Department realised anti-fraud savings of €111.63million in the first three months of this year. Total savings were up by more than €16.8million on the previous quarter.

“These savings result from normal reviews carried out by this Department and the work of Departmental staff engaged in investigative work”, the Minister said today.

“Fraud and abuse represent a misuse of taxpayers money and I intend to ensure that the Department’s efforts are directed at ensuring that social welfare funds go only to those who are entitled to them”, Minister Coughlan added.

Savings in One-Parent Family Payment realised the most at almost €35million, followed by over €30million in Unemployment Payments and over €15million in Illness payments. Approximately eighty-five percent of the 1,462 employers who underwent PRSI inspections were found to be compliant. Almost 80,000 claim reviews were carried out.

A total of 137 cases were forwarded to the Chief State Solicitor’s office for the initiation of prosecution proceedings. Some 85 cases were finalised in court – of which 2 were served with prison sentences, 7 received suspended sentences, 54 were fined, 3 received community service and 8 received the benefit of the Probation Act. The remaining penalties included cases that were bound to the peace or adjourned with liberty to re-enter.

Total social welfare expenditure for 2003 reached 10.5billion. More than 928,000 people received a weekly social welfare payment, over 534,000 families received child benefit during the year and more than 1.5million people were recipients of Free Schemes including electricity, travel and phone rental.

**ENDS 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2004**