



**NEWS RELEASE**

**February 4 2010**

**Hanafin launches "Getting There - Transport and Access to Social Services"**

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin T.D. today (*Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010*) launched a new report **Getting There - Transport and Access to Social Services** which was published by the Citizen's Information Board. Minister Hanafin said **"this new report on public transport availability is based on feedback from members of the public to the Citizens Information Services and highlights their experiences accessing relevant services."**

The report outlines issues which transport users have encountered with public transport including access to transport in some areas, difficulties experienced by some people in getting information on transport options and access to services for people with disabilities.

Commenting on this aspect of the report, Minister Hanafin said **"the report acknowledges that progress has been made in recent years and that we are "Getting There" in a number of ways but that there is still work to be done. In this regard the Government is committed to continued investment in our transport infrastructure in spite of the difficult economic situation. The Department of Social and Family Affairs continues to fund the Free Travel scheme and contribute to the Rural Transport scheme as part of its remit on access to services."**

Expenditure on the Free Travel scheme in 2010 is expected to be in the region of €77 million and almost 680,000 people currently hold a Free Travel Pass, which allows them to travel for free on most CIE public transport services, Luas and a range of services offered by a large number of private operators in various parts of the country. The Free Travel Pass can also be used on cross border journeys between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland and customers aged 66 years and over can travel for free on journeys within Northern Ireland.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs also provides funding of €1.5million towards the Rural Transport Programme, in addition to that provided by the Department of Transport to cover the cost of journeys undertaken by Free Travel pass holders.



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

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A further €1.3million in 2009 was provided under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance through the Travel Supplement which assists customers with necessary ongoing travel costs that cannot be met from their own resources.

***Getting There - Transport and Access to Social Services*** sets out a number of recommendations on how the services can be delivered in a more integrated way to benefit existing and future transport users. Minister Hanafin said **"the report has, most appropriately, given serious consideration to effective use and targeting of resources in the current economic climate and I know that it will be of interest to a number of agencies and Government Departments in developing future policy."**

Minister Hanafin concluded by commending the Citizens Information Board for producing ***Getting There - Transport and Access to Social Services*** "which puts citizens at the centre of how services are delivered."

**PRESS RELEASE ENDS**