



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Minister Coughlan Opens Donegal Public Service Centre

Mary Coughlan, T.D., Minister for Social and Family Affairs today officially opened the Donegal Public Service Centre, in Donegal Town. The centre brings many agencies together under 'one roof' and creates a focal point for the provision of public services to customers and the community.

"This Public Service Centre represents a huge infrastructural investment in the town of Donegal and will make a big contribution to public service availability and provision in the area," said Minister Coughlan.

"My Department has been very happy to collaborate in the effort to regroup services and I'm particularly pleased that we have been able to relocate the Donegal Social Welfare Local Office to this Centre.

"This augurs well for the new Government decentralisation programme. The decentralisation programme offers great opportunity to those staff who wish to return home to Donegal or move away from city life as well as the benefits it will bring to the local economy," said Minister Coughlan.

An additional 350 people from the Minister's Department will be moving to Donegal - 120 will be located in Bunrana and a further 230 will be based in Donegal Town. This will increase the number of Social Welfare staff in Donegal from 290 to 640.

Minister Coughlan referred to the Government's commitment to the electronic delivery of public services and announced that: "the REACH agency, for which my Department is responsible, is set to launch the initial public services broker at the end of this month. It will be known as Reachservices and will provide a single point of online access to public services."

Organisations providing services from the centre include; the Department of Social and Family Affairs, Donegal County Council, FAS, Donegal Information Service, Comhairle, Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Department of Agriculture & Food and the National Roads Authority (NRA). The North Western Health Board plans to locate key services to the centre in the near future.

Minister Coughlan's department also funds the independent information service, operated by Donegal Information Service, and the Money Advice and Budgeting Service provided from the centre.

The Donegal Centre is the fifth Public Service Centre to open in the County and joins the others in Carndonagh, Milford, Letterkenny and Dungloe. There are plans to open a sixth centre in Stranorlar in the future.

ENDS
4TH June 2004