



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Minister Coughlan Asks Public To Inform Government Policy In Unique Forum In Croke Park

Mary Coughlan, Minister for Social and Family Affairs, has issued an invitation to families and people working with families to help advise the Government on how best to support families today in Croke Park.

"I am inviting anyone who has interest as an individual member of a family, or local and national organisations, to come along, feed your experience into the process and help to inform family policy," said Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Coughlan.

"This consultation process is an opportunity for family members and those who work with them to express the concerns and themes which influence family life today."

"I'm anxious to hear from as wide a range of people as possible."

"I know there are ever increasing pressures on families and a number of themes have emerged in the meetings already held, including problems relating to relationships, economic pressures on families, child care, the care of elderly family members and a range of other topics."

"As Minister with responsibility for Family Affairs, I am determined to keep family issues central to Government policy, as illustrated by our "Families First Policy".

"This policy is evident in such initiatives as the establishment of the Family Support agency, which administers the funding distributed today, and the nationwide consultative Family Forum process which has already been held in a number of venues around the country.

A report on the proceedings of each forum will be drawn up and published early next year at the start of the 10th Anniversary of the Un International Year of the Family. The report will detail the discussions on the impact of social and economic developments and current Government policies and programmes on their families, their changing and emerging needs and what they see as the priorities, for strengthening family well being.

ENDS

4th December 2003