



NEWS RELEASE

December 5 2008

115 extra staff to deal with increasing number of people attending Social Welfare Local Offices

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin T.D. today (*5th December 2008*) said that an additional 115 staff will be appointed to 48 Social Welfare Local Offices around the country, to help deal with increasing number of people applying for social welfare services. There are currently approximately 2,000 staff working in offices around the country processing social welfare claims.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs recently undertook a review of staffing levels in Local Offices due to the increased number of claims for jobseekers payments as a result of the increase in the Live Register. Minister Hanafin said, **“we are committed to providing a quality customer service to all our customers. This includes ensuring that all applications for Jobseekers payments are dealt with as speedily as possible. The assignment of these additional staff will help the offices most affected by the increase in the Live Register.”**

In another new development aimed at helping deal with backlogs in jobseekers applications, a new section has been established in the Townsend Street office - with 18 Deciding Officers – to specifically help tackle the backlog of claims from offices around the country.

Minister Hanafin stressed that in line with current Government policy there will be no recruitment of additional staff. **“The extra 115 staff will be at Clerical Officer and Staff Officer level’s and are being sourced from the existing**



Civil Service numbers both from within the Department of Social and Family Affairs and from other Government Departments.”

The Minister has visited a number of local offices around the country and has seen at first hand the enormous effort that staff are making in dealing with increasing claim loads.

Already this year the Department of Social and Family Affairs had taken a number of initiatives in response to the increase in claims for jobseekers payments. These included the allocation, in the summer, of an additional 31 posts, the working of additional overtime in Local Offices and the extension of contracts of temporary staff recruited in a number of offices. Minister Hanafin added **“the Government is committed to helping the most vulnerable in society in these difficult economic times. For anyone who loses their job, the experience can be quite distressing. We want to be there to support them in firstly getting their entitlements and then to offer whatever supports are possible to help them back into employment or training opportunities. It is expected that these additional staff will help to speed up the process of making a claim for a jobseekers payment and we will continue to keep the processing times of all our offices under review.”**

ENDS



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Offices where the 115 additional staff will be appointed to:

LOCAL OFFICE	TOTAL
Dublin Offices	
Apollo House	1
Ballyfermot	2
Ballymun	1
Bishops Square	4
Blanchardstown	3
Clondalkin	4
Coolock	3
Dun Laoghaire	4
Finglas	2
Kilbarrack	2
Navan Rd	2
North Cumberland St.	3
Nutgrove	3
Swords	2
Tallaght	4
Thomas St	1

LOCAL OFFICE	TOTAL
Provincial Offices	
Arklow	2
Athlone	2
Ballina	1
Bray	3
Buncrana	2
Carlow	2
Carrick-on-Shannon	1
Castlebar	1
Cavan	1
Clonmel	2
Drogheda	3
Dundalk	2
Dungloe	1
Ennis	3
Galway	5
Kilkenny	3
Letterkenny	2
Limerick	6
Listowel	1
Longford	1
Loughrea	1
Mullingar	2
Navan	4
Newbridge	5
Newcastlewest	2
Sligo	2
Thurles	1
Tralee	3
Tullamore	2
Waterford	5
Wexford	3