



Department of Social and Family Affairs

€207.7 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 €207.71 million in the first six months of this year. Savings were €96.08 million for the second quarter of this year.

“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.

“I want to ensure that the budget of this Department is used to benefit those people who are genuinely dependent on a social welfare payment,” Minister Coughlan added.

In the second quarter of this year, savings in Unemployment Payments realised the most at almost €33 million, followed by over €27 million in One-Parent Family Payment and over €13 million in Illness payments. Over eighty-five percent of the 2,000 employers who underwent PRSI inspections were found to be compliant. Over 75,000 claim reviews were carried out.

A total of 128 cases were forwarded to the Chief State Solicitor’s office for the initiation of prosecution proceedings in the relevant quarter. Some 53 cases were finalised in court – of which 3 were served with prison sentences, 2 received suspended sentences, 19 were fined and 13 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, an increase of 10.3 per cent over the previous year and an annual average increase of over 9 per cent since 1994. More than 959,000 people received a weekly social welfare payment, over 534,000 families received child benefit during the year.

ENDS September 6th 2004