



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

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### **Record Funding Of €7.61million For Marriage, Child And Bereavement Counselling Services – Mary Coughlan Minister Of Social And Family Affairs**

Mary Coughlan T.D., Minister for Social and Family Affairs, today urged organisations to apply for the record funding of €7.61m she has allocated this year for Marriage, Child and Bereavement Counselling Services.

“The Family Support Agency administers this Scheme of Grants to Voluntary Organisations providing Marriage Counselling, Marriage Preparation Courses, Child Counselling in relation to parental separation and Bereavement Counselling and Support Services on the death of a family member. I urge organisations to get their applications for funding to the agency by the closing date of Friday 27th February,” said Minister Coughlan.

“This Government’s families first approach is demonstrated by this record funding, which is nearly seven times the allocation in 1997. The benefits of counselling in assisting families, and their members, are long established. The massively increased funding under the scheme since its inception acknowledges this effectiveness,” said Minister Coughlan.

“The series of nationwide family fora, which I hosted last year to take the pulse of the nation on how best the Government can support families, were a further example of our commitment to families. I will shortly publish a thematic study of the issues that arose during the fora. The study will have a major influence on the development of a strategy for family policy,” added Minister Coughlan.

Application forms and further information are available from the Family Support Agency, Floor 4, St Stephen’s Green House, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Tel (01) 611 4100.

**ENDS**

**11th February, 2004**

#### **Note for News Editor**

#### **The Family Support Agency**

The Family Support Agency was formally established by Minister Coughlan on May 6th last. Its main task is to protect the family, by supporting the stability of family life and addressing the effects of changing family formation.

The FSA provides a family mediation service, develops marriage and relationship counselling, undertakes research and advises the Minister on family issues and works in partnership with the community and voluntary sector. The Family Support Agency has been allocated a budget of €20.2m for 2004.

The Family Support Agency:

- Provides a family mediation service to help couples, who have decided to separate, negotiate their separation without acrimony. Over the last six years this service has expanded from two centres in Dublin and Limerick to 14 centres through out the country.



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- Supports, promotes and develops the provision of marriage and relationship counselling and other family support services.
- Supports, promotes and develops the Family and Community Services Resource Centres programme. The number of centres has increased from 10 to over 85 since 1997.
- Provides and disseminates information about these services and other family issues, and
- Provides financial assistance to voluntary organizations for these purposes.
- Undertakes or commissions research into matters related to its functions.