



**Minister Cullen opens new Family Mediation Service in Raheny and launches Family Support Agency's 2006 Annual Report**

**Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Martin Cullen**, T.D., today (Thursday 11 October 2007) opened a new **Family Mediation Service** office in Raheny in Dublin and launched the Family Support Agency's 2006 **Annual Report**.

Minister Cullen congratulated those involved in establishing the Raheny office of the Family Mediation Service mentioning that the Service, which recently celebrated its 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary, helped more than 1,500 couples last year and has grown from two centres in 1997 to 16 centres throughout the country.

Minister Cullen said: "The Family Mediation Service is becoming increasingly important as a service that is a sensitive, yet vital, conduit in helping couples who have decided to divorce or separate to reach agreement on central issues such as post separation living arrangements and finances". He added that: "it has a critical role in working out agreed parenting arrangements that allow the children involved to retain close bonds with both parents".

The new Raheny office at Skillings House, Raheny Shopping Centre, Howth Road, Dublin 5 is open from 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm on Thursdays and Fridays for mediation. The contact telephone number for the office is 01 8510730.

The Family Mediation Service is a key part of the Family Support Agency which was established almost four years ago. Minister Cullen, launching the Family Support Agency's 2006 Annual Report, spoke of the wide range of family services provided by the Agency and said that there is: "a growing acceptance that in a rapidly changing society such as we have in Ireland today such supports are necessary and the services they provide are invaluable".



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The Minister paid tribute to the staff of the Family Support Agency who he said: “have taken the vision of the Government and brought it to life in the Agency” and confirmed that the Government is committed to the continued support of their work. Funding for the Family Support Agency from the Department of Social and Family Affairs has increased to over €35 million in 2007 which represents an increase of over 40% in just two years and a doubling in funding in the four years since the Agency was established.

Further information on the work of the Family Support Agency and the Family Mediation Service is available at [www.fsa.ie](http://www.fsa.ie)

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### **Note for Editors:**

The Family Support Agency was established on 6 May 2003 by the Minister for Social and Family Affairs and brings together programmes and services to support families introduced by the Government in recent years. Its mission is to promote family and community well being through the provision of appropriate supports and services to families.

The Family Mediation Service, which is a key element of the Family Support Agency, is a free, professional, confidential service that enables couples who have decided to separate to reach agreement on all issues related to their separation. It assists couples to address the issues on which they need to make decisions including post-separation living arrangements, finances and parenting



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arrangements to enable children to have an on-going relationship with each parent.

**Press Release Ends**