



**Cullen – still time to apply for
Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance**

To date this year, allowance paid in respect of over 82,000 households

Martin Cullen TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs, today (Friday 14 September 2007) reminded families who may be entitled to the **Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance** that they still have time to apply for the allowance. Applications are welcome for another two weeks up until **Friday 28 September**.

Families who are dependant on social welfare payments or taking part in approved employment schemes or training courses may be entitled to the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance - a social welfare payment to assist with back to school expenses. Parents should apply to their local Community Welfare Officer for this allowance. Some €38 million is available this year – an increase of €12 million over that provided last year.

Under the allowance, eligible parents can receive **€180** for each eligible child aged between 2 and 11 years – up €60 on last year and **€285** for each child/student aged between 12 and 22 years – up €95 on last year. (The 2006 rates were €120 and €190 respectively).

Minister Cullen said: “Last year a Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance was paid in respect of 161,451 children and students in over 80,000 households. To date this year, the allowance has been paid in respect of over **82,000 households** and I am anxious that as many people as possible apply for the allowance before the closing date in two weeks time. The Government has made **€38 million** available this year - up 46% on that provided last year. I would strongly urge parents to check with the Community Welfare Officer - based in their local HSE office - to see if they are eligible for the allowance and to get their application in before the closing date of Friday 28 September. The rates of payment have increased substantially on previous years and go some way towards the cost of helping families purchase school uniforms and shoes at a time of financial pressure”.

A person may qualify for payment of the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance if he/she has a dependant child; is in receipt of a social welfare or health service executive payment; is participating in an approved employment scheme or attending a recognised education or training course and if the household income is at or below certain specified levels. Parents who are getting Family Income Supplement may also qualify.



ENDS

Issued by:

Michelle Hoctor, 087 856 3070
Oonagh Duffy 087 254 9683

Editor's note:

A couple with one child whose weekly income is at or below €470.80 may qualify for the allowance. A couple with two children whose weekly income is at or below €492.80 may qualify. If they have three children, they can have an income of €514.80 and qualify. (For families with more children, the income limit is increased by €22 for each additional child).

A lone parent with one child could have an income of up to €331.30 per week and qualify for a payment. (For lone parent families, with more than one child, the income limit is increased by €22 for each additional child).

The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance is administered by the Community Welfare Service of the Health Service Executive on behalf of the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

The closing date for applications is Friday 28 September, 2007. Parents and guardians who wish to contact the Department of Social and Family Affairs about this allowance can telephone the Department on (LoCall 1890 66 22 44, 9.30am to 5pm). An information booklet can be ordered by phoning 1890 20 23 25 at any time or by emailing forms@welfare.ie