



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí Department of Social Protection

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Over 30 voluntary and community groups meet with Minister Burton at pre-Budget Forum

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, TD, today (16th September 2011), hosted a pre-Budget Forum to give voluntary and community organisations the opportunity to make pre-Budget submissions relating to social welfare schemes at a special session in St Andrews Resource Centre in Dublin's Pearse Street today.

In her opening remarks to the groups at the Forum, Minister Burton said: **"While the economic and fiscal crisis in Ireland and further afield make the headlines almost every day, I am very much aware that there are many real human stories behind these headlines. Unfortunately the reality is that expenditure will have to be further reduced in the forthcoming Budget.**

I firmly believe that the burden of these reductions must be shared fairly across all sectors of society, from the top down. I want to reassure the groups here today, who represent those who have been most affected by this crisis, that the importance of protecting the most vulnerable in society is a priority for me, as Minister for Social Protection, and for my colleagues in Government.

I am very conscious that the vast majority of people who turn to my Department for protection played no role in causing this financial crisis, and that the crisis has imposed a disproportionate burden on those at the lowest point of the economic spectrum.

And I will do my best to ensure that the burden of resolving the crisis does not fall disproportionately on their shoulders. One of my key priorities is to therefore to ensure that the Department's reduced resources are targeted at the people who need them most."

This year the Department of Social Protection will spend in the region of €20.62 billion, 39% of all current Government expenditure. Over 1.4 million people receive a weekly payment from the Department of Social Protection, including those getting a jobseekers payment, on pensions, as a carer or for illness and disability as well as payments in respect of a further 190,000 qualified adults and over 494,500 children.

Over 30 groups were invited to attend the Forum, representing older people, people with disabilities, lone parents, children, unemployed people, carers and family support groups. (See appendix for list of organisations invited to attend).

Minister Burton concluded by emphasising that at this stage no decisions have been made in relation to social welfare measures for the next Budget and she thanked the organisations for taking the time to meet with her today.

PRESS RELEASE ENDS



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Appendix

List of Organisations Attending

1. Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE)
2. Congress Centres Network (ICTU)
3. Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI)
4. People with Disabilities in Ireland Ltd. (PWDI)
5. Inclusion Ireland
6. Carers Association
7. Age Action Ireland
8. Care Alliance Ireland
9. National Women's Council of Ireland
10. Cúram
11. Women's Aid
12. National Association of Widows in Ireland
13. Retired Workers Committee
14. Irish Senior Citizens Parliament
15. National Federation of Pensioners' Associations
16. Older and Bolder
17. Active Retirement Ireland
18. TREOIR (Federation of Services for Unmarried Parents and Children)
19. OPEN
20. One Family
21. Unmarried and Separated Fathers of Ireland
22. Barnardos
23. Children's Rights Alliance
24. Social Justice Ireland
25. Saint Vincent de Paul
26. Trustus We Care
27. Pavee Point
28. CROSSCARE – sub group –Health Eating for all
29. Threshold
30. Vincentian Partnership for Justice
31. The Wheel
32. Irish Rural Link
33. FLAC