



NEWS RELEASE

July 18 2008

Almost €50million funding provided to MABS and Citizens Information to help people throughout the country

Hanafin urges those who have financial worries to avail of services

Help is at hand for people if they need advice on budgeting, money management or general information about services that are available to them. This was the message from Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin as she visited MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service) and CIC (Citizens Information Centre) offices in Dun Laoghaire today (18th July 2008) .

Minister Hanafin said **“MABS advice can be accessed by calling into one of 65 MABS office locations around the country for a face-to-face service; through accessing the website or through the lo-call national telephone Helpline number, 1890 283438.”** Almost €18 million has been provided by the Department of Social and Family Affairs to fund MABS in 2008.

Recent figures showed that the total amount of debt owed by people using the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) in 2008 - based on the debt they had when they first came to the MABS - amounted to €82.6 million. This Minister Hanafin TD, said works out at an average amount of €10,200 debt per MABS client.

Minister Hanafin went on to say **“the MABS telephone Helpline is a confidential support service which operates Monday to Friday from 9am to 8pm and gives easy access to MABS advice for those with debt problems”**.

The Helpline has received 4,673 calls so far this year. In relation to the face-to-face countrywide service, 8,115 new clients approached MABS in the first six months of this year. Over 200 people sought assistance from the Dun Laoghaire MABS.

Minister Hanafin also visited the Dun Laoghaire Citizens Information Centre (CIC). This is one of a network of 106 Citizens Information Centres and a further 162 outreach services throughout the country which provides information and advice in relation to a range of social services.

Speaking at Dun Laoghaire CIC, Minister Hanafin said, **“staff in the CICs around the country dealt with almost 900,000 queries last year. This**



clearly shows the importance of the service in local communities. Dun Laoghaire CIC alone dealt with almost 10,000 of these.”

The CICs provide independent information and advice in relation to health, social welfare, education, family support, housing, taxation, citizenship, consumer matters, employment and training, equality, asylum and immigration matters. Information is also available at the national Citizens Information Phone Service (lo call 1890 777 121 from 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday) and the Citizens Information website (www.citizensinformation.ie).

The Minister continued **“through the work in my clinics, I am very familiar with the fact that access to accurate information is vital for people when they are experiencing difficulties. I was delighted to have the opportunity to meet the staff of MABS and CIC and hear first hand from them the range of queries they deal with each day and the excellent service they are providing in increasing awareness of entitlements among those who may need the assistance.”**

The Department of Social and Family Affairs is providing over €30 million to fund Citizens Information services around Ireland in 2008.

Editor's note:

The **Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)** provides support to people who are over-indebted and need help and advice in coping with debt problems. Professional and confidential advice is available. MABS money advisors help clients to assess their financial situation, make a budget plan for the future and deal with creditors.

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service can be accessed in three ways:

- Through 52 MABS companies operating in 65 locations around the country which provide a face-to face service;
- the MABS website www.mabs.ie which offers an online money management facility and
- the MABS national Helpline 1890 283438 (or 1890 BUDGET) which aims to provide ease of access to MABS support for those experiencing debt problems.

The contact information for local MABS offices around the country is also available on www.mabs.ie



Department of Social and Family Affairs

The **Citizens Information Board** (formerly Comhairle) is responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a wide range of social and civil services through:

- The web-based information sources www.citizensinformation.ie
- The Citizens Information Phone Service, a low call service available Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-9p.m. 1890777121
- The face to face services, the network of Citizens Information Services (CIS) nationwide offering information and advocacy services to the public. Contact information for the network of offices is available at www.citizensinformation.ie

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