



INFORMATION GUIDE FOR LONE PARENTS LAUNCHED BY MINISTER MARY COUGHLAN

A quick reference guide to services and entitlements will be given to all one parent families applying for help to the Department of Social and Family Affairs said Minister Mary Coughlan today.

The Minister was speaking at the launch of the newly revised edition of the One Parent Families Information Guide, recognised as a primary source of information for lone parents, information providers, employers, teachers, health professionals and community groups.

“Parenting can be very demanding for all parents, even more so for people raising a family on their own. With this in mind I have initiated a series of pilot programmes in local social welfare offices providing support for lone parents with educational and work opportunities and with their social welfare and housing entitlements,” said Minister Coughlan.

“Family patterns are changing in our society - indeed these changes can be seen in our extended families and communities, and in national demographic statistics. The Family Support Agency, which I established recently, will bring together a number of family



programmes to address the needs of families in this changing environment,” added Minister Coughlan.

Minister Coughlan’s Department, AIM Family Services, Cherish, Cómhairle, Gingerbread and Treoir compiled the booklet, with the Department and Cómhairle funding its publication. The booklet is available free of charge from the organisations involved in its production and from Citizens Information Centres. Minister Coughlan’s Department will also give a copy to each new person applying for the One-Parent Family Payment.

“I am very aware of how important it is to develop easy access to information. The rights and entitlements of citizens can stand and fall on their quality and availability. I am therefore delighted to both fund and launch the publication of this booklet. It is already established as a primary source in this area, a reputation that will be further enhanced by this revised and up-dated edition, “said Minister Coughlan.

More 79,000 people claimed the One-Parent Family Payment in 2002, at a cost of €613m.

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*For further information contact:
Carmel Fields at 01-7043860 or 087-2547232*



Eddie Walsh at 01-7043184 or 087-2549683



NOTE FOR NEWS EDITORS

CÓMHAIRLE

Cómhairle is the national support agency responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social services.

It provides Citizens Information for the general public, support for Information providers (e.g. voluntary and statutory organisations) and social policy and research information.

TREOIR

Treoir is the national federation of both statutory and voluntary agencies, which provide services for unmarried parents and their children.

Treoir is a voluntary organisation supported by Government, Health Board and other grants.

AIM

AIM was founded in 1972 and is a voluntary organisation, which offers non-directive counselling, legal information and a family mediation service to people experiencing marital, relationship and family problems. A drop-in centre has been operating since 1975.

CHERISH

Cherish is a voluntary organisation established in 1978 to offer support to single parents and single pregnant women. The service is non-directive and personal growth is nurtured through self-help and mutual support.

Activities include a full time information service, a pregnancy counselling service, back to work courses including computer classes and personal development classes, parenting courses and a drop-in centre.



GINGERBREAD IRELAND

Gingerbread Ireland was established in 1978 and provides help to people coming to terms with the new realities brought about by parenting largely on their own.

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