



SUPPORT FOR EMIGRANTS –
SOCIAL AND FAMILY AFFAIRS MINISTER
MARY COUGHLAN

Mary Coughlan T.D., Minister for Social and Family Affairs, today addressed the Fr. Joe Taaffe Emigrant Summer School Conference and launched the new edition of the “Return to Ireland Guide” produced by Emigrant Advice.

“My own Department’s role in supporting emigrant groups has centred on providing good quality, clear and comprehensive information for those about to leave and those hoping to return,” Minister Coughlan said.

“I’m therefore delighted to launch the new edition of the “Return to Ireland Guide” funded by my Department and produced by Emigrant Advice. I have substantially increased funding available in my Department for emigrant advice and information from €127,000 to €427,000 this year.”



“For those who need support, the services of the Irish welfare agencies in Britain offered a helping hand. This Government is conscious of - and acknowledges - the valuable service that these agencies give.

We have underlined that support by allocating significant resources to the Dion Fund, which in turn supports these agencies financially. This year over €870,000 has been allocated for services to the elderly in Britain,” added Minister Coughlan.

“This increased funding is in line with the aspirations of the Report of the Task Force on Emigration, which was finalised last year. The Task Force set the issue of emigration in a modern context and has provided a template for a new approach to meeting the needs of our emigrants abroad, and in particular, those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged,”

ENDS

19th September, 2003



NOTE FOR NEWS EDITORS

Fr Joe Taaffe Emigrant Summer School Conference

This week-long conference is organised by the Irish Emigrant Liaison Committee – Mayo Branch. About 100 Irish emigrants from Britain are expected to attend. The Mayo Association in both Luton and Manchester are leading groups from those areas. Guests invited to the summer school include individuals and groups interested in Emigrants and from the health services. The theme of this year's summer school is "*Irish Emigrants and Health Issues*".

Emigrant Advice

Emigrant Advice is the main dedicated service to prospective emigrants in Ireland. It provides a pre-departure information and support service to intending emigrants. The focus is on helping those people most vulnerable when emigrating. It also helps people returning home after living abroad.

It is based in Dublin City Centre, under the auspices of Crosscare, the social care agency of the Dublin diocese. Some 2,192 queries were dealt with in 2002.

Emigrant Advice can be contacted on 01 872 6171.

Dion Fund for Irish emigrant welfare

The Dion fund for Irish emigrant welfare in Britain is allocated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the basis of recommendations from the Dion Committee. The Committee was set up in 1984 in response to concerns about the position of Irish emigrants in Britain. In 2003 responsibility for the fund transferred from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to the Department of Foreign Affairs as recommended in the Report of the Task Force on Policy regarding Emigrants which was published in August 2002.

