



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Minister Announces 25% Increase In Funding For Kilkenny Family Resource Centre

Brennan Says Local Groups Have Pivotal Role In Helping People During Traumatic & Stressful Times

The Minister for Social Affairs, Seamus Brennan T.D., said today that local community groups around the country have an increasingly pivotal role to play in helping to addressing the needs of men, women and children in their locality who may be going through particularly stressful times in their lives.

Minister Brennan was speaking when attending the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Fr McGrath Resource Centre in Kilkenny which provides a range of community support services and links to advice agencies and groups.

Minister Brennan announced increased funding of €25,000 – through the Family Support Agency - for St Canice's Community Action, which is based in the Fr McGrath Centre, bringing the total funding for this year to €125,550.

Minister Brennan also said that the target set by the Government under the National Development Plan of funding 100 Family Resource Centres by the end of 2006 will be delivered. There are currently 92 core-funded groups in the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme, with an additional three Resource Centres having recently signed contracts with the Agency.

A further 8 groups have applied for inclusion in the Programme. Funding for the Programme has increased substantially from €317,500 in 1994 to over €12.9 million in 2006.

Minister Brennan said: "The Government recognises the critically important contribution that Resource Centres make to combating disadvantage and reaching out, in particular, to those who feel vulnerable and marginalised. The services provided by community resource groups are often emotional and practical lifelines for those who may be going through particularly traumatic situations and experiencing a range of problems that combine to leave them feeling isolated and powerless".



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In Kilkenny, Minister Brennan also visited the Social Welfare Local Office, the Citizen's Information Centre and the town's Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) office.

He announced that over 25,000 people in Co. Kilkenny, including some 16,000 children, are now benefiting directly from a range of welfare supports and entitlements. The total of 25,516 welfare beneficiaries includes 10,536 families with 20,953 children in receipt of Child Benefit, Unemployment Payments (2,484), Old Age Pensions (3,824), Retirement Pension(1,485), Disability Benefit/Allowance (2,403), Widow's & Widower's Pensions (2,186), One-Parent Family Payment (1,309), Supplementary Welfare Allowance (483), Carer's Benefit/Allowance (534) and Family Income Supplement (272).

The 10th anniversary of the Fr McGrath Centre is a milestone in the local area which has come about through an extensive process of consultation, planning, lobbying, campaigning and fundraising. Funding to date through the Family Support Agency for the Family Resource Centre has been more than €596,428.

Minister Brennan said: "Initiatives like the Fr McGrath Centre are invaluable in helping to tackle the issues of marginalisation and exclusion. The services provided are a practical response to the real local needs of the communities serviced by the centres. All of the dedication and commitment shown at local level is, of course, inspired by a vision of change for the good of the community and society in general".

The Minister said his Department recognized the important part played by local community groups around the country in improving the quality of the lives of the people by helping them to develop their capacity to change their situation for the better. It is through a combination of local community initiatives on the ground and support from statutory agencies and other bodies that local communities can realise their potential to play a real part and have a real say in their own development.

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