



**Rent Supplement Measures Not Having Adverse Effects –  
Mary Coughlan Minister For Social And Family Affairs**

Mary Coughlan, Minister for Social and Family Affairs, today welcomed the report of the Social Partners Group on Rent Supplement established under Sustaining Progress.

"This is an authoritative and wide ranging report on the impact of the Rent Supplement measures announced in November last year," said Minister Coughlan..

"Since the 1<sup>st</sup> January of this year a total of 30,199 people have been awarded rent supplement payment. In 2003, €332m was spent on rent supplement payments to private landlords with no assets accruing to the State. This was an increase of over 30% on the expenditure incurred in 2002.

"Reform of this scheme was necessary because of the increased cost and because the scheme had, in effect, become a housing measure - yet failed to provide a long-term solution to the housing difficulties of those applying for the scheme,

"A significant survey was carried out by all the Health Boards, at the request of the Social Partners Group, in which 498 cases were randomly selected where rent supplement payments had been refused in the period from the end of January to May 2004," said Minister Coughlan.

Of those cases 57 (11.4 %) were refused because of the changes, but the majority were based on traditional grounds:

- 109 cases (21.8 %) were not in need of accommodation or had alternative accommodation available;
- 106 cases (21.2 %) were refused as the rent sought was deemed excessive and
- 86 cases (17.2 %) had means in excess of the statutory limits.

"I note the conclusions of the group which stated that "based on the survey of cases and discussions with the Community Welfare Officers the new measures are not having any significant, adverse impacts having regard to the design of the measures, including the appropriate levels of discretion by the Community Welfare Officers."

"I also note that the group welcomed the announcement in July of the new initiative to meet the long term housing needs of rent supplement recipients, and their conclusion that the Rent Supplement scheme has evolved from an income support into a housing support, which reason prompted the reforms of the scheme. The report also recorded that the cap on rent limits has had a positive effect," concluded Minister Coughlan.

NB: A copy of the Report of the Social Partner's Group on Rent Supplement is available in the publications area of the website of the Department of Social and Family Affairs [http://www.welfare.ie/publications/spg\\_rent\\_sup04.html](http://www.welfare.ie/publications/spg_rent_sup04.html)

Ends September 24<sup>th</sup> 2004