CPSU industrial action will affect services to the public at Social Welfare offices

All Social Welfare Local Offices (SWLO) will be closed to the public on Thursday, 26th February 2009 as a result of industrial action by members of the Civil and Public Services Union (CPSU). Other grades are due to attend for duty as normal. Telephone services for members of the public will be significantly affected across all of the Departments offices.

However, Social Welfare Branch Offices (SWBO), which are all operated by private individuals under contract to the Department, will be open to deal with their customers as usual. Details of Local office and Branch office locations are listed on the Departments website (see link below).

Over 1.3 million weekly payments are made to social welfare customers across all schemes, including jobseekers, one parent family payments, widows and pensioners. The vast majority of customers receive their weekly payment by way of electronic fund transfer into a bank or financial institution or through electronic payment or book at their post office.

Following discussions with the CPSU, the Union has indicated to the Department that every effort will be made to ensure that payments are not affected by this industrial action and they have informed their members accordingly.

The loss of a full days processing time for a system as large as the Department of Social and Family Affairs may lead to short term knock on effects on processing and the putting into payment of claims. The Department will continue to monitor the situation and inform the public of the likely impact, if any, on services in the coming days.

A spokeswoman for the Department said "the Department very much regrets any disruption of services to members of the public caused by this industrial action. Every effort is being made to limit the effect of the disruption for customers. Offices will re-open as normal on the Friday morning. For people seeking information about services, the Department's website has detailed information on a range of schemes operated, as well as the recent introduction of Jobseekers forms available to download."

ENDS

Link to website list of Social Welfare Local Offices and Social Welfare Branch Offices
http://www.welfare.ie/EN/ContactUs/Pages/default.aspx#localoffices