



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Minister Coughlan Opens Sligo Family Resource Centre

Mary Coughlan T.D., Minister for Social and Family Affairs, today officially opened the Sligo Family Resource Centre in Sligo Town.

In congratulating the people involved in establishing and running the centre Minister Coughlan said: "The services which you provide address the multi-faceted needs of men, women and children who may be going through particularly traumatic situations or are experiencing a whole range of problems which have left them feeling isolated and powerless."

"The Resource Centre Programme is an ideal example of voluntary and community groups combining with Government to provide services to people in their own communities, especially those who are marginalized and socially excluded," said Minister Coughlan.

"Last December I opened the first Family Mediation Service in the North West, here in Sligo Town. The opening of this Family Resource Centre, allied with the Mediation Service, represents a significant improvement in family services in the North West Region," said Minister Coughlan.

Minister Coughlan emphasised the importance of the family in our society and referred to the ways public policy reflects this. She cited the report of the nationwide consultation process on family policy launched recently and the €1m she is providing for a special awards scheme to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the UN International Year of the Family. This funding is open to family and community groups nationwide, including the Sligo Family Resource Centre and other groups in the North West.

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See Attached note for News Editors Notes for News Editor

Family Resource Centre Programme

The FRC Programme was established in 1994 with the aim of combating disadvantage and improving the functioning of the family unit. The centres funded under the programme provide special services, such as counselling and information for lone parents, young mothers and socially excluded families. They seek to enhance the self-esteem and potential of people by working closely with them within their communities. They encourage the participation of local people in all aspects of the centres work, including planning and management.

Family Support Agency

Minister Coughlan formally launched the Family Support Agency on May 15th last. Its main task is to protect the family, by supporting the stability of family life and addressing the effects of changing family formation.

The Family Support Agency provides a family mediation service, develops marriage and relationship counselling, undertakes research and advises the Minister on family issues and works in partnership with the community and voluntary sector. The Family Support Agency has been allocated a budget of more than €20m for this year.



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Awards Scheme for the 10th Anniversary of UN International Year of the Family

Applicants are asked to refer to one or more of the general themes, in their applications, that have already featured in the family consultation forums hosted around the country last year by Minister Coughlan, namely:

- Parenting and childhood
- Balancing work and family life
- Relationships
- Family as carer
- Community support for families.

Awards will be on a once-off basis and must be used and accounted for within the year.

The closing date for applications is Friday 30th April 2004. Application forms and further information are available on the website <http://iyf2004.welfare.ie> or from:

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