



An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of  
Children and Youth Affairs



## Minister Burton launches new research report on understanding childhood deprivation at national conference

Joan Burton TD, Minister for Social Protection, today (Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012) launched a new report on understanding childhood deprivation in Ireland. It is based on the national Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2009 of 1,800 households with children.

The Minister noted that her Department plays a critical role in addressing child poverty through family and child income supports, as well as training, education and employment supports for parents. She said: **“The Department will spend over €3 billion on supports to families and children through payments such as the Child Benefit scheme, Family Income Supplement, qualified child increases on weekly social welfare payments and the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance.”**

The report, published by the Department and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), finds that over a quarter of children aged 2 to 15 are experiencing deprivation. It also shows that parents are diverting household resources to protect children.

The Minister said: **“The data relates to 2009 when the previous government was in power. But I remain concerned with the findings that children still have a higher poverty risk than adults and that these children are more likely to be in low income and jobless households. Poverty is especially detrimental for children due to its long-term effects that persist into adulthood. Addressing these issues is therefore a Government priority.”**

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD, who delivered the closing address at the conference said: **“Child poverty remains a gut-wrenching reality in 21st century Ireland. The rate of poverty and deprivation for children is higher than among adults. So, when this Government sets its sights on lifting people out of chronic poverty, it is clear that the heaviest lifting will be required when it comes to addressing child poverty. But tackling deprivation, lifting children out of poverty, will require the mobilisation of a range of stakeholders and a whole of government response, one which my Department will be actively involved in, particularly through the provision of quality early years interventions and effective child welfare & family support services.”**

Dorothy Watson, one of the authors of the report *Understanding Childhood Deprivation in Ireland*, said: **“We knew already that children were at a higher risk of poverty than adults. Now we have a better understanding that a range of factors are important in enabling parents to protect their children. An adequate income is clearly the basic requirement. Beyond this, mother’s education, employment – especially of the mother – and family stability are also important.”**

Minister Burton concluded: **“The report supports international and national evidence that addressing poverty requires a multi-dimensional long-term strategy that cuts across many policy domains. I look forward to working with colleagues across Government, to not only address child poverty but also promote the longer-term well-being of children and improve children’s life chances.”**



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Minister Burton was being 'shadowed' at the conference by James Devlin as part of National Job Shadow Day. The Job Shadow Initiative, which is organised by the Irish Association of Supported Employment (IASE) gives people with disabilities the opportunity to Job Shadow in a job of their interest and gain a greater understanding of what is involved in that particular area of work. They also learn about the skills required and employers' expectations from employees in the work place.

In relation to Job Shadow Day, Minister Burton said: "I am delighted to be participating with James in National Job Shadow Day again this year. Today, hundreds of people with disabilities throughout Ireland will have the opportunity to shadow a workplace employee as they go through a normal working day in hundreds of employment locations across the country. A core belief of the IASE is that people with disabilities including those with significant disabilities should have equal opportunity to have a job. This is a belief which I share and support."

**ENDS**

#### **Note for Editors**

The Minister was speaking at the conference 'From Child Poverty to Child Well-being: Lessons from Research and Policy', taking place today, Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012. It is organised by the Department of Social Protection and the Economic and Social Research Institute, in partnership with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Children's Research Centre, TCD.

The report is part of the Department of Social Protection's research programme on monitoring poverty trends and providing analysis and evidence to inform policy. It is produced by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). The authors are Dorothy Watson and Bertrand Maître (ESRI) and Christopher T. Whelan (UCD). The report can be downloaded from [www.socialinclusion.ie](http://www.socialinclusion.ie) or from [www.esri.ie](http://www.esri.ie).

**ENDS**