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## **Families in hidden break-up trauma – Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Coughlan TD**

There is a need for research into the causes and numbers of people who go through the trauma of family break-up, said the Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Coughlan.

“While we know the numbers applying for divorces, there remains a hidden numbers of families going through the trauma of break up in Ireland today, “ said Minister Coughlan.

”The number of divorces granted annually in the Circuit Court has risen to some 2800. These figures only refer to those who are legally married. There are an unknown number of other families who are also going through the trauma of break up.

”I would welcome proposals for research to look at the causes of family breakdown for both marital and non marital families, “ said Minister Coughlan.

”I am committed to ensuring that counselling is in place to support families, and this support is being reinforced with the establishment of the Family Support Agency which will be responsible for an increased budget for the current year of over €17million.

“I believe that the Family Support Agency will be a key instrument of Government policy in developing the kind of response that is so necessary to families today, “ the Minister continued..

”It is critical that we continue to provide quality supports for those families going through the trauma of separation.

”Independent research carried continues to underpin the development of policy and I would expect that any separation and break up trauma research would be looked at favourably under the second round of the Government’s Families Research Programme, “ said Minister Coughlan.



The Minister said that grants totalling over €6.6million in 2002 for marriage, child and bereavement counselling which support the stability of family life have been given to over 460 groups – almost six times the level of funding granted in 1997.

Minister Coughlan was speaking at the launch of “ Divorce in Ireland : Marital breakdown, answers and alternatives” by Kieron Wood and Paul O’Shea in Buswell’s Hotel.

**ENDS**

**28<sup>th</sup> January 2003**