



Department Issues Alert After Uncovering Evidence Of Exploitation Of Romanian Migrants

Statement By Minister For Social Affairs, Seamus Brennan T.D.

Earlier this month (January), suspicions were raised within my Department that a number of unscrupulous individuals were exploiting Romanian migrants to this country by charging a fee for arranging applications for Personal Public Service (PPS) Numbers. Enquiries by officials from this Department have since confirmed that this has in fact been occurring and the Gardaí have been notified.

A PPS No is a persons' unique identifier for access to Public Services. Allocation of PPS Numbers is the sole responsibility of the Department of Social & Family Affairs. It is a free service provided at the Department's Local and Branch offices only. The Department does not have any appointed agents or intermediaries of any description.

Any person who needs a PPS Number should call at one of the Departments' Local or Branch Offices where they will be dealt with. Applicants for PPS Numbers should bring with them evidence of identity, such as a passport or National Identity Card, and evidence of residence in this country, such as a letting agreement, letter from their landlord, or a utility bill.

Applications for PPS Numbers are dealt with on a 'walk in' basis so there is no need to make a prior appointment. The vast majority of applications are dealt with in the initial visit. Translation facilities are available in our offices for applicants who are not comfortable in dealing through English. People are notified of their PPS Number by post, usually within 5 working days of application.

The Department is taking immediate steps to ensure that members of the Romanian community are aware that the PPS Number service is a free service, not provided through intermediaries. Notices to this effect are being placed in various hostels where a significant number of Romanian Nationals may stay during their first few days in this country. The Department has also alerted the Chaplain to the Romanian community in Dublin who has agreed to raise awareness of this issue at Masses this

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weekend. A notice will be placed on the Department's website, www.welfare.ie and in the Department's Local Offices.

My Department is constantly on the look out for any signs of fraud or exploitation in relation to the services it provides, as is the case in this instance. When appropriate, the Gardaí are informed.