



**MINISTER CULLEN – APRIL CHANGE TO PAYMENTS TO BENEFIT OVER  
3,000 CARERS**

**Part of overall €37.7 million carer's package announced in Budget 2008**

**Martin Cullen TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs** said today (31 March 2008) that over 3,000 people will benefit from changes to the **Carer's Allowance** and **Carer's Benefit** schemes which will come into effect this week.

The changes relate to a carer's income disregard (i.e. discounted income), announced as part of **Budget 2008**.

Increases to the Carer's Allowance income disregard provided for in Budget 2008 means that from **Thursday 3 April** a single person can have an income of €332.50 per week and a couple can have an income of up to €665 per week and still qualify for the maximum rate of Carer's Allowance. The previous levels were €320 and €640 per week respectively. The earnings threshold for Carer's Benefit is being similarly increased so that a carer with earnings of up to €332.50 per week can still qualify for Carer's Benefit from 3 April.

Commenting on the increased income disregards, **Minister Martin Cullen TD** said: "This improvement supports the work of over 3,000 carers in a practical way. The changes form part of the overall **€37.7 million** carer's package



## **Department of Social and Family Affairs**

---

announced in Budget 2008. The upward adjustment to the income levels means that over 3,000 carers will receive a weekly increase in their carer's payment with some carers now, for the first time, coming in under the net and qualifying for a carer's payment." The Minister added: "To put it in context, a couple now earning in the region of €37,200 annually and also having a caring role can qualify for the current maximum rate of Carer's Allowance while a couple earning in the region of €60,400 can still receive a reduced carer's payment. A single carer can have an income of up to €18,600 annually and receive the maximum weekly Carer's Allowance." Minister Cullen added: "This increase in income disregards ensures that all those on average industrial earnings will continue to qualify for a full Carer's Allowance."

These April changes come on foot of increases in the rates of payment to carers which came into effect in January when almost **41,500 carers** received an increase of €14 per week bringing the maximum rate of the **Carer's Allowance** for those aged 66 or over to **€232 per week** and under 66 years to **€214 per week**. Carer's Benefit also increased by €14 under Budget 2008 to **€214.70** per week.

**Carer's Allowance** is a means-tested payment provided for carers on low to middle incomes who provide full-time care and attention to a person/people in need of such care. **Carer's Benefit** is the corresponding social insurance based payment. Carers receiving these payments can engage in employment, self-employment, education/training outside of their caring role, for up to 15 hours per week.



## **Department of Social and Family Affairs**

---

Carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance can also avail of Free Travel and receive the Household Benefits Package which includes an electricity/gas allowance, telephone allowance and a free television licence.

Recipients of the Carer's Allowance and Carer's Benefit automatically receive the annual Respite Care Grant, which increases to €1,700 in respect of each care recipient from June.

Minister Cullen also reminded members of the public and family and informal carers in the community to participate in the consultation process for the **National Carer's Strategy** which continues until Friday 18 April 2008.

The Strategy will set out the Government's vision for family and informal carers and establish a set of goals and actions in areas such as income support, health care and services, housing, transport, information services, labour market issues, programmes of training (during caring and post caring), social inclusion and research and technology development.

Submissions on the development of the National Carer's Strategy can be made to the Department of Social and Family Affairs by:

- email to [carers.strategy@welfare.ie](mailto:carers.strategy@welfare.ie),
- fax to 01-7043457, or
- by post to the Secretariat which is located in the Department of Social and Family Affairs at the following address:



## **Department of Social and Family Affairs**

---

National Carer's Strategy Consultation,  
Planning Unit, Floor 1  
Department of Social and Family Affairs,  
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada,  
Store Street, Dublin 1.

### **Issued by:**

Michelle Hoctor, 087 856 3070  
Niamh Fitzgerald, 087 254 7232