



**An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection**

www.welfare.ie

**Minister Ó Cuív announces new National Advocacy
Service for
People with Disabilities**

New service will protect the rights of people with disabilities and make positive changes in their quality of life

Minister for Social Protection, Éamon Ó Cuív, TD this afternoon (5th October 2010) announced that a new National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities will be set up under the Citizens Information Board. The new Service will provide independent, representative advocacy services for people with disabilities and will be in place from January 2011.

Speaking today Minister Ó Cuív said: "The importance of information provision and advice cannot be over-stated. I am very aware that people's rights and entitlements are often dependent on access to good advice. This is particularly relevant to those who are marginalised or who need someone else to advocate on their behalf."

Minister Ó Cuív went on to explain: "The new Service will be regionally structured; with five regional teams replacing the existing pilot projects which have provided assistance to more than 5,000 people with disabilities. The five regional teams will be managed by Citizens Information Services in Dublin, Westmeath, Offaly, Waterford and Leitrim."

Advocacy Support Workers will be recruited to support the provision of an enhanced mainstream service so that more people with disabilities can access and use the general Citizens Information Services while the National Advocacy Service will seek out and respond to more vulnerable people with disabilities.



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The new Service will be undertaken within current resources, providing a more integrated service and achieving better value for money.

Mr Tony McQuinn, Chief Executive, Citizens Information Board said:
"This is a very good day for people with disabilities in Ireland as a National Advocacy Service is introduced. I would like to thank the forty six organisations who generously provided the opportunity to run a pilot advocacy service over the past five years. The pilot service demonstrated the importance of advocacy for people with disabilities in having their voices heard and their choices respected."

Minister Ó Cuív concluded by saying: "The new National Advocacy Service will give a voice to people with disabilities who are isolated in the community or who are living in residential institutions and who cannot represent themselves. The Service will protect their rights, help them gain their entitlements, obtain a fair hearing and make positive changes in their quality of life."

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Editor's note:

Nationally, the Citizens Information Board, an agency of the Department of Social Protection, is responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a wide range of social and civil services through:

- The web-based information sources www.citizensinformation.ie
- The Citizens Information Phone Service, a low call service available Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-9p.m. 1890777121
- The face to face services, the network of Citizens Information Services (CIS) and Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) offices nationwide



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offering information and advocacy services to the public. Contact information for the network of offices is available at www.citizensinformation.ie

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