



Information and advice services in Limerick expanding throughout the county

Minister Hanafin meets staff and volunteers providing service in Limerick MABS and CIS

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin T.D. today (12th December 2008) visited the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) and the Citizens Information Service (CIS) in Limerick city which serve a population of 184,000 in Limerick city and county.

Meeting staff at the Limerick Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), Minister Hanafin commended their work saying, **“the staff of Limerick MABS are offering advice and guidance to people at a time in their lives when they may feel overwhelmed by the situation they find themselves in. Christmas can be a daunting time of year for people who are in difficult financial circumstances. The budgeting service that Limerick MABS provides can offer a sense of reassurance and comfort for people now and into the New Year.”**

Minister Hanafin also pointed to the increase in the number of clients using MABS services this year, saying, **“Limerick MABS assisted 185 new clients in 2007 whereas in the first nine months of this year, over 460 clients sought advice from Limerick MABS”.**

Limerick MABS currently operates outreach services in three locations in Co. Limerick and plans to offer a MABS outreach service in four other locations in early 2009. Remarking on this, Minister Hanafin said, **“I’m delighted to hear that Limerick MABS is constantly extending its services to other**



communities in the county. There is now an outreach service in Abbeyfeale, Moyross and Southill and in early 2009, Limerick MABS will offer their services to the communities in Newcastlewest, Kildimo, Foynes and Askeaton."

MABS are funded by the Department of Social & Family Affairs and have offices in 65 locations throughout the country. The National MABS Helpline is available on **1890 283 438** (for the price of a local call) to take calls from members of the public seeking help and advice or on their website at www.mabs.ie.

Later in the day, Minister Hanafin visited Limerick Citizens Information Service (CIS) which first opened its doors to the public in 1981. Meeting the staff and volunteers, Minister Hanafin said, **"in the first years of its existence, the 12 volunteers in Limerick CIC dealt with approximately 1,000 enquiries. In 2007, the 19 staff and 52 volunteers dealt with 38,000 enquiries and 30,000 callers. This enormous growth shows the need for the comprehensive and trusted information service that Limerick CIS dedicated staff and volunteers are offering in the area."**

The Citizens Information Service provide free independent information and advice in relation to health, social welfare, housing, taxation, consumer matters, employment rights, careers and local information. Minister Hanafin continued, **"Limerick CIS has established a Citizens Information Centre in Kilmallock and Newcastlewest and their mobile information unit brings the information service to towns and villages across Co. Limerick."**

The Department of Social and Family Affairs is providing over €30 million to fund Citizens Information services around Ireland in 2008.



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Minister Hanafin also met with staff in the Social Welfare Local Office in Dominic Street in Limerick. The Minister saw for herself the enormous effort that staff in Limerick Local Office are making in dealing with the increasing claim load. As a result of a recent review of staffing levels in Local Offices, an additional six staff will be appointed to Limerick Local Office to help deal with the increasing number of people applying for social welfare services. This follows the allocation of three additional staff to Limerick Local Office during the summer.

Nationally, an additional 115 staff will be appointed to 48 Social Welfare Local Offices around the country. There are currently approximately 2,000 staff working in offices around the country processing social welfare claims.

ENDS

Note for Editors:

CITIZENS INFORMATION CENTRE

The Citizens Information Board (formerly Comhairle) 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) nationwide offering information and advocacy services to the public. Contact information for the network of offices is available at www.citizensinformation.ie



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Opening hours:

Limerick CIS:

General enquiries: Monday - Friday: 9.30am to 4.30pm (through lunch).

Consumer Affairs: Last Thursday of each month 10.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm

FLAC: Wednesday 7.30pm to 9.00pm

Ombudsman: Last Tuesday of each month

Threshold: First Tuesday of each month 10.00am to 1.00pm and 2pm to 4.00pm

Kilmallock CIS: Monday – Thursday 10am – 2pm

Friday 10am – 1.30pm

Newcastlewest CIS: Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday 10.20am – 2.30pm

Contact details are as follows:

Limerick CIC

54 Catherine Street

Limerick City

Co. Limerick

Telephone: (061) 311 444

Email: limerick@citinfo.ie



MONEY ADVICE AND BUDGETING SERVICE (MABS)

MABS is a national, free, confidential and independent service for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt.

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

Contact details are as follows:

Limerick ***MABS***,

Unit 9, Tait Business Centre,

Dominic Street,

Limerick

Telephone: (061) 403109

Email: [***limerick@mabs.ie***](mailto:limerick@mabs.ie)