



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

www.welfare.ie

**Minister Burton launches public consultation on the Review of the
National Poverty Target**

The Minister for Social Protection today launched a public consultation process to be undertaken by her Department as part of the review of the national poverty target. The purpose of the review is to enable the Government to adopt appropriate and achievable national poverty targets to meet Ireland's contribution to Europe 2020 and the commitments in the programme for government. The review is to be completed by November 2011.

Minister Burton said: 'I am inviting the public to have its say on the review of the national poverty target. It is vital that there is widespread public support for the national poverty target, so that all elements of society are engaged in the common aim of reducing and eliminating poverty. I am particularly keen to hear the views of people experiencing poverty and the groups that work with people in poverty.'

The Minister continued: 'While Ireland is in the midst of a major economic and fiscal crisis, it is important that we keep in mind the importance of protecting the most vulnerable in society. The national poverty target provides a key reference point in developing economic and social policies. The national poverty target is also the means by which we contribute to the new European poverty target, which aims to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion by 2020.'

A key element of the consultation is to ascertain the views of people experiencing poverty from across the country. In order to do this a series of four workshops in local community venues will take place where people can have their say on the current poverty targets and how a new poverty target can be achieved. These workshops will take place in September next at local venues in Cork, Donegal, Dublin and Galway.

In addition an online survey will be carried out in order to ascertain the views of the public on the current poverty target and how this target can be strengthened in the future. The survey will be hosted on www.socialinclusion.ie. It will remain open until 30th September to allow interested parties as much time as is possible to respond.



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Further consultations include a workshop with technical experts from government departments, agencies, social partners, and research organisations, and bilateral meetings with the social partners, including the community and voluntary pillar.

The review will also be a key theme at the 9th annual Social Inclusion Forum taking place on November 9th next in the F2 Centre, Fatima, Dublin 8. This event will be attended by up to 200 community and voluntary representatives.

A consultation paper has been prepared providing further information on the review itself, how poverty is defined and measured, the policy context of the review and progress made towards the national poverty target. This paper is available on www.socialinclusion.ie.

A report of the consultation process will inform the final report of the review to be presented to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy. The review is being undertaken by the Department of Social Protection.

ENDS

Note to Editors:

For information, the national poverty target, as set out in the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016*, is to reduce the rate of consistent poverty to between 2-4 per cent by 2012 and to eliminate it by 2016, from a baseline rate of 7 per cent in 2005. The latest (2009) figures show a consistent poverty rate of 5.5 per cent. This is an increase on the 2008 rate of 4.2 per cent. The 2010 figures will be available from the Central Statistics Office in November.