



NEWS RELEASE

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**Hanafin publishes Social Welfare Bill to give
effect to Budget changes**

Government targeting resources for those who most need support

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin T.D., today (*4th November 2008*) published the **Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2008**, which provides for the increases in the rates of social insurance and social assistance payments and improvements in Family Income Supplement as announced in Budget 2009. The Bill also provides for certain amendments to the social welfare code and includes amendments to PRSI.

Minister Hanafin said that 2009 will see **“an extra €2.6 billion being allocated to Social Welfare, bringing the total spend to over €19.5 billion. The fact that we are planning for a greatly increased number of people seeking support while signing on the Live Register, means that our resources are being stretched even further in order to benefit more and more people. Despite this the Government has provided for increases to well over 1 million recipients.”**

From January, all **pensioners and carers aged over 66** will get a weekly increase of €7.00 in their payments, while those of working age in receipt of social welfare payments will receive a €6.50 per week increase. There are also increases for qualified adults and qualified children for those in receipt of social welfare payments.

The weekly income limits used to determine entitlement for **Family Income Supplement** will be raised by €10 per week per child, thereby giving an increase



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of €6 per week per child in January. The Bill also provides for the deduction of any contributions payable under the tax known as "income levy" in calculating weekly family income for the purposes of Family Income Supplement.

Amendments to the provisions governing the Illness Benefit, Jobseeker's Benefit and Health and Safety Benefit schemes are also contained in the new Bill. These provisions relate to the duration of payment of these benefits as well as the contribution conditions for eligibility for the benefits concerned. These, the Minister said, are **"aimed at redressing a situation where claimants may have had only a very limited contribution record but were able to access significant benefits and to ensuring the sustainability of these social insurance schemes in the future."**

Changes to the **Child Benefit** scheme are also covered by the Bill. For qualified children aged 18 in 2009, there will be a half rate of payment of Child Benefit. This payment will cease from 2010 onwards. However, a special compensatory payment of €15 per week will be paid both in 2009 and 2010 to certain families with 18 year olds in full time education or with disabilities. These families include those on a social welfare payment who get an increase in their payment in respect of the relevant child and similar families in receipt of Family Income Supplement or where the child is in receipt of Disability Allowance.

The Bill further provides for amendment to a number of other Acts, including the Pensions Acts 1990 to 2007, the Civil Registration Act 2004 and the Citizen's Information Board Act 2007.

Minister Hanafin went on to say **"the social welfare Budget also provided for increases in the rate of the Fuel Allowance from January, a two week increase in the duration of fuel allowance payments in April and**



improvements in the eligibility conditions for access to the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance.” As these schemes are administrative in nature, these improvements do not require amendments to social welfare legislation and will be implemented as announced.

ENDS

Full details of the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2008 and explanatory memorandum is available on www.oireachtas.ie