



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

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**Government announces fund to assist flooding victims**

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton T.D, and the Minister for the Environment Phil Hogan TD today (8th November 2011) announced that the Government has agreed to set up a Humanitarian Assistance Scheme with an allocation of up to €10 million to provide means-tested financial support to people who have suffered damage to their homes as a result of the recent flooding.

The Government has also established a cross-Departmental/Agency Working Group, chaired by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, to oversee the State's collective response to those affected by the flooding.

The working Group\* will identify any gaps that may exist within existing services to address the consequences of the flooding for individuals, families and communities. If additional services are required, including humanitarian assistance, the Group will report to Government with proposals to address these issues.

Minister Burton said: "I have been to visit many of the families who have suffered from the flooding and I have seen first hand the damage to some people's homes."

Minister Hogan said: "I welcome the establishment of this Group which will work in a speedy and focused way to ensure that those who require the assistance of the State following the severe flooding of 24 October get it. It will build on the enormous work already done on the ground by Community Welfare Officers, the Irish Red Cross, Local Authorities and others."

Minister Burton said: "The Government recognises the devastation suffered by many families arising from these floods. Staff from the Department of Social Protection (former Community Welfare Officers) have already made house to house calls to individuals they have identified as being vulnerable at this difficult time. In addition, emergency clinics have been established in the worst affected areas to offer help to households. Payments are currently being made to families who need urgent financial assistance with basics such as food, clothing and bedding. This funding will continue to be disbursed to individuals and families as required.

The main details of the Humanitarian Assistance Fund are as follows:



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- It will be administered on the ground by staff from the Department of Social Protection (former Community Welfare Officers),
- It will provide hardship alleviation assistance, as opposed to full compensation, to householders affected by the flooding.
- Damage to a person's home and its basic contents, such as carpets, flooring, furniture, household appliances and bedding, will be the main criteria. Structural damage may also be considered.
- Eligibility will be subject to a means test.
- Assistance will not be given for losses which are covered by insurance.
- Commercial and business losses will not qualify for humanitarian assistance.
- Applications will be prioritised so that the most urgent ones can be dealt with very quickly.

"I am conscious that for some families it could be weeks if not months before the damage to their homes is fully apparent. I would like to reassure families that this humanitarian assistance scheme will be there for them in the months ahead," Minister Burton concluded.

**PRESS RELEASE ENDS**

**Notes to Editors:**

\* The Working Group will include representatives of:  
Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (chair)  
Department of Social Protection;  
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform;  
Office of Public Works;  
Office of Emergency Planning: and  
City and County Managers Association