



**Eisiúint Nuachta**

**10th Lúnasa 2009**

**More Money Advisors to be appointed to 19 MABS offices**

**Seek free and independent advice if you are feeling pressure from debt –  
urges Hanafin**

**Nineteen Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS) offices around the country are to get additional staff to help deal with the increasing demands for services, the Minister for Social & Family Affairs Mary**

**Hanafin T.D., announced today.** These additional money advisors will bring to 271 the number of money advice staff working in 65 locations around the country.

Minister Hanafin said that she had received Department of Finance approval for the additional posts which will see five of the busiest urban offices each getting a full time temporary post, while 14 other offices, with increasing caseloads, will get an additional half time temporary post.

**“We are seeing many more people across the country experiencing financial difficulties - whether they have lost their job or been put on reduced working hours or have taken a reduction in pay. In the past year there has been a substantial increase in the number of new clients approaching the MABS service.”**

All the staff working as Money Advisors come from a wide variety of backgrounds, bringing invaluable expertise with them, said Minister Hanafin. **“Money advisors have a unique mix of skills, experience and knowledge – ranging from personal and counselling skills, knowledge of relevant legislation to**



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**understanding of debt types and solutions. MABS Money Advisors also have detailed knowledge of legal issues relating to both contracts and debts as well as a detailed understanding of the social welfare system.”**

Minister Hanafin said that **“the implementation of the new statutory codes of conduct in respect of mortgage arrears and for the licensed money lending industry, along with the recently agreed Irish Banking Federation/MABS new Protocol to help personal customers to manage their debt means there are placing even more demands for advice and assistance. MABS money advisors negotiate directly with banks and financial institutions on behalf of clients to secure better terms to help people through the tough times.”**

The additional cost of these staff, which will be contracted for up to two years, will be met from efficiencies achieved from the assignment of responsibility for the MABS to the Citizens Information Services. Some 500 volunteers throughout the country also serve on MABS Boards of Management. **“Both MABS and CIS are rooted in the local communities they serve, and play a pivotal role in helping people seeking information and assistance through the commitment of both their employees and volunteers”** said Minister Hanafin.

In the first six months of 2009, almost 9,800 new clients were seen by MABS staff across the country, with a further 1,600 seeking information about budgeting and money management from local services. The average debt owed by new clients, when they first came to MABS, was some €15,100.

The total amount owed by the new clients in June 2009, to creditors, based on the debt they had when they first came to the MABS, amounted to €148 million with;



## **An Roinn Gnóthaí Sóisialacha agus Teaghlaigh**

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- 65 % owed to banks/financial institutions
- 16 % owed to credit unions.
- 3 % owed to utilities bills
- 2 % owed to debt collection agencies
- 1 % owed to moneylenders
- 1 % owed to local authorities

The MABS helpline received over 12,200 calls in the first six months of 2009, compared with almost 11,000 in the full year of 2008. **“This helpline assists local services manage their appointment lists by providing initial preliminary MABS service to clients and ongoing support while they await their appointment with their local money advisor. The telephone helpline can handle straight forward single debt cases such as threatened utility disconnections and deals directly with the ESB and Bord Gais in relation to these cases. Over 90% of callers to the helpline find that their money management and budgeting issues can be resolved with the assistance of their helpline advisor”** said Minister Hanafin.

**ENDS**

The following offices are being allocated 1 additional fulltime Money Advisor

**Waterford MABS**

**Bray MABS**

**Limerick MABS**

**Tallaght MABS**

**COMAC MABS (Ballyfermot)**



## **An Roinn Gnóthaí Sóisialacha agus Teaghlaigh**

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The following offices are being allocated an additional half post Money Advisor

### **Cork MABS (Cork City and East County Cork)**

**North Galway**

**Dublin North East**

**Kildare MABS**

**Blanchardstown MABS**

**North Tipperary MABS**

**West Cork MABS**

**Arklow MABS**

**Laois MABS**

**Fingal MABS**

**Dun Laoghaire MABS**

**Carlow MABS**

**South Galway MABS (including Galway city)**

**Ballymun MABS**

### **Notes for Editors**

**MABS is a national, free, confidential and independent service** for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt. Professional and confidential advice is available. MABS money advisors help clients to assess their financial situation, make a budget plan for the future and deal with creditors. MABS is funded by the Department of Social & Family Affairs, with €18million provided in funding for this year.

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service can be accessed in three ways:

- Through 53 MABS companies operating in 65 locations around the country which provide a face-to face service;



## **An Roinn Gnóthaí Sóisialacha agus Teaghlaigh**

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- the MABS website [www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie) which offers an online money management facility and
- the MABS national **Helpline 1890 283438** (or 1890 BUDGET) which aims to provide ease of access to MABS support for those experiencing debt problems.

The contact information for local MABS offices around the country is also available on [www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie)

### **What can MABS Money Advisors do to help?**

Money Advisors provide practical assistance, advice and support to people who have financial difficulties by:

- working out a budget suited to the individual or family.
- negotiating on behalf of clients with all creditors including banks, financial institutions, insurance companies, utility companies and credit unions to secure better terms for the client in managing the repayment of their debts.
- assisting, where appropriate, with setting up a special account with their local Credit Union into which an agreed amount of money is lodged regularly and from which each month the Money Advisor makes the repayments to the creditors on behalf of the client and
- providing ongoing support to people who successfully overcome their financial difficulties.