



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí Department of Social Protection

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Ó Cuív – committed to targeting needs of unemployed through job activation

The **Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2010** this evening (Tuesday 13 July 2010) completed its Committee, Report and Final stages in the Seanad. The Bill has now completed all stages in the Houses of the Oireachtas.

The Bill as passed includes measures to give effect to An Taoiseach's strategy to deal with the issues around unemployment and income support in a more coherent way. The measures in the Bill will facilitate the Minister for Social Protection to deal with job activation within the one Government department and over time, to provide more opportunities for meaningful work activity to unemployed people.

Among the measures within the Bill are provision for the transfer of the Community Services Programme and the Rural Social Scheme from the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs to the Department of Social Protection, subject to a commencement order. The Bill also allows for the transfer of responsibility, and associated funding, for the employment services and community services of FÁS from the Minister for Education and Skills to the Minister for Social Protection.

Speaking after the conclusion of the Bill in the Seanad, **Éamon Ó Cuív, TD, Minister for Social Protection** said: “The passing of the measures in the Bill mark another significant step towards integrating income support and unemployment services within one single department.”

He added: “The biggest concern in many households around the country today is the loss of a job, where the household has gone from two incomes to one or from one to none. One of the priorities I have been given in my Department is to place a particular focus on job activation or helping people get back into the workforce.”

Referring to the transfer of the schemes to his Department, Minister Ó Cuív said: “There are a lot of real needs in communities in terms of provision of after-school services, childcare and services for older people that we could continue to address through these schemes. There is also the semi-economic sector where we have heritage centres and tourist amenities, enterprise support units and sports clubs with gyms and all-weather facilities that can generate some of their financial income, but that will always require some small state support from work schemes.

“Best practice internationally has indicated that integrated social welfare and employment support services are the most effective way of ensuring that people are not simply assisted with income support but are facilitated to a full participation in society through employment or by developing their employment potential by means of training, education and work experience. I am committed to progressing this practice and to providing meaningful work activity for those who are unemployed,” concluded the Minister.

ENDS