



PRESS RELEASE

19/09/08

**30 voluntary and community groups meet with
Minister Hanafin at pre-Budget Forum**

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin, TD, today (19th September 2008), hosted a pre-Budget Forum to give 30 voluntary and community organisations the opportunity to make submissions to the Minister on welfare changes which they would like to see included in the forthcoming budget.

In her opening address, Minister Hanafin said, **“social welfare spending, which is expected to be over €17 billion this year, accounts for about 30% of current Government expenditure. It is vital that these resources are allocated to those who are most in need of support. We have gone some way to achieving that aim: each week, over 1 million people receive a payment from the Department of Social and Family Affairs in respect of 1.5 million beneficiaries and almost 580,000 families receive a monthly Child Benefit payment, which is paid in respect of 1.1 million children”**.

The Minister went on to say, **“the purpose of this Forum is to provide organisations with an opportunity to have an input into the budget process. I am here to listen to what you have to say. However, you are all aware that we are in a very different economic situation this year than in previous years and while it is unlikely that we can implement all of your proposals, we will certainly consider them very carefully. I want to assure you that, in these more challenging times, I and my colleagues in Government continue to take our responsibilities to the less well off in our society very seriously”**.



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Some 30 groups were invited to attend the Forum which was held in St Andrew's Resource Centre in Dublin. The organisations represented older people, people with disabilities, lone parents, children, unemployed people, carers and family support groups. (See appendix for list of organisations invited to attend).

Minister Hanafin concluded by saying, **"the role played by organisations such as yours is essential in ensuring that I am fully aware of the issues and concerns facing the people you represent and I would like to thank you for your comprehensive proposals and for taking the time to come here to meet with me today"**.

ENDS

Appendix

ORGANISATIONS INVITED TO ATTEND FORUM

1. Cúram
2. One Family
3. Threshold
4. Children's Rights Alliance
5. Irish Senior Citizens Parliament
6. Saint Vincent de Paul
7. Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI)
8. National Federation of Pensioners' Associations
9. Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI)
10. Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE)
11. TREOIR
12. Pavee Point



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13. National Association of Widows in Ireland
14. One Parent Exchange and Network (OPEN)
15. Retired Workers Committee
16. Forum of People with Disabilities
17. Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA)
18. Family Solidarity
19. Tallaght Welfare Society
20. Age Action Ireland
21. Barnardos
22. Congress Centres Network (ICTU)
23. Care Alliance Ireland Associations
24. Unmarried and Separated Fathers of Ireland
25. Parental Equality
26. ACCORD (Catholic Marriage Counselling Service)
27. People with Disabilities in Ireland (PWDI)
28. Carer's Association
29. Inclusion Ireland (National Association for People with an Intellectual Disability)
30. National Women's Council of Ireland