



**PRESS RELEASE**

**30/01/2009**

## **Minister Hanafin opens new Social Welfare Local Office in Ballymun**

*Support and advice on social welfare schemes and services  
available at new office - Hanafin*

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin, T.D., today (*Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> January*) opened a new Social Welfare Local Office in Ballymun. The office, which accommodates 23 staff, is part of the new civic and cultural hub along the Main Street, in the very heart of Ballymun and will replace the old office in the shopping centre which was in use for 22 years.

Addressing staff, community and business leaders in Ballymun today Minister Hanafin said **“this new office reflects the desire on the part of the Department of Social and Family Affairs to respond positively to the increasing need for modern facilities that provide customers with comfortable surroundings in which they can conduct their business. I am proud to stand here and acknowledge one of the Government’s largest contributions to the civic regeneration of Ballymun.”**

Commending the staff on the efficient and dedicated support they offer to those customers in need of assistance from Social Welfare the Minister said **“the staff of this office strive to provide an excellent level of service to the customers in Ballymun. As always they are working hard to process claims for Jobseeker’s Payments and One Parent Family Payment as**



**quickly as possible. Another staff member is to be assigned shortly to this office from the extra 115 staff I announced at the end of last year to deal with the rise in the Live Register.”**

The office will also continue to provide older people and people with families with a range of information and advice on their social welfare entitlements. Customers can also hand in their Illness Benefit certificates to the office, where they are promptly processed.

Minister Hanafin also stressed that **“in these difficult economic times it is important to see that in addition to these general services, a Facilitator has taken up work in the last year. The Facilitator provides a range of support services to work with all local people, including groups such as the long-term unemployed, lone parents and people with disabilities to further their education and training with a view to finding sustainable employment or to return to the active labour market either by taking up employment or becoming self-employed.”**

The Minister went on to praise the wider community in Ballymun for their dedication and spirit of co-operation which was exemplified by the hard work on the Fair Trade Initiative which resulted in Ballymun being awarded Fairtrade Town of the Year in September 2008. **“The regeneration spirit of the people in Ballymun is further evident in their ongoing determination to upskill by working with organisations such as FÁS and the Local Employment Service on pre-employment courses with the view to possibly finding employment with IKEA when they open their Irish flagship store later this year.”**

Ballymun Social Welfare Local Office is open daily to the public from 9.30am - 4pm and can be contacted at (01) 816 5100. It is one of some 61 Social Welfare Local Offices providing services to the public throughout the country.



## **Department of Social and Family Affairs**

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Minister Hanafin concluded by thanking the Local Manager Gerry Hickey and all the staff of the office many of whom have served the people of Ballymun for a long number of years. The Minister also thanked the Office of Public Works and the developers for their efforts to create this modern facility for the people of Ballymun and surrounding areas.

**ENDS**