

NYF Member Youth Services Current Awareness Update

SECTION 1: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

NATIONAL YOUTH WORK DEVELOPMENT PLAN LAUNCHED

On 5 August the Minister for Youth Affairs, Ms. Síle de Valera T.D., launched the long awaited National Youth Work Development Plan for the years 2003 to 2007. The Plan includes a complete costing for the five-year lifetime of its implementation. Although no clear commitment was given to funding the full implementation of the Plan, the Minister did state that two priority areas of the Plan, the Child Protection Training Programme and the appointment of an Assessor of Youth Work would be implemented in 2003.

It is available at a cost of €3.00 from: **Government Publications, Sun Alliance House, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01 7476000.** It can also be downloaded from the Youth Affairs section of Department of Education & Science website at: www.education.ie

AMENDMENTS TO REFUGEE ACT 1996 ENACTED

The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr Michael McDowell T.D., announced that from Monday 15 September, the extensive amendments to the Refugee Act 1996 made by the recent Immigration Act would be coming into full operation. Some of the key changes being introduced include:

Designating States as Safe Countries of Origin

The Minister can now designate countries as "safe countries of origin" for the purpose of considering asylum applications from nationals of those States. With effect from 15 September 2003 the following countries will be designated as safe countries of origin: **Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia**, who will become members of the EU on 1 May 2004. Also included in the Safe Countries Order are **Bulgaria and Romania**. These two countries are applicant EU States.

Applicants for asylum who are nationals of a designated country will continue to have a merits consideration of their applications, but it will be for each applicant to rebut the presumption that they are not in need of refugee protection. Appeals in such cases will be dealt with by the Refugee Appeals Tribunal on the basis of papers alone rather than an oral hearing.

Prioritisation of Certain Categories of Applications

The Minister may direct the Refugee Applications Commissioner or the Refugee Appeals Tribunal to give priority to certain classes of applications. The Minister intends to issue a direction to the Commissioner to prioritise applications from designated safe countries of origin as of 15 September 2003.

Duty to Co-operate, Withdrawal and Deemed Withdrawn Cases

The Refugee Act now spells out the clear statutory duty on every asylum applicant to pursue their asylum applications actively and to co-operate at all times with the processing agencies. An applicant who fails to offer full co-operation runs the strong risk that the application will be rejected under the new, more efficient, mechanisms for disposing of applications that are withdrawn or are not actively pursued.

Credibility of Applicants

The Act lists a range of factors the Commissioner and the Refugee Appeals Tribunal must consider when assessing the credibility of the applicant. These include: no reasonable explanation for a lack of identity documents or for having forged documents; giving vague, incomplete or obviously false information on how the applicant got to Ireland; and, where an application is made other than directly on arriving in the State, having no reasonable excuse for delay in making the application.

Fingerprinting

There are revised provisions allowing for the fingerprinting of all applicants, with special safeguards applying to applicants under 14 years of age.

Detention Provisions

Section 7(c) (vi) of the Immigration Act, 2003 increases the maximum interval between Court appearances to review the detention of applicants from 10 to 21 days.

A new feature to come into effect will be in the case where the application should be dealt with in another Member State, the transfer of the applicant in such cases will be done by a simple transfer order rather than by the present mechanism of a deportation order. There will still be a right of appeal, but the transfer order will be immediately effective on the making of the first-instance decision and any appeal can be made from abroad; any change as a result of the appeal will of course mean that the applicant will be accepted back into the State to have the asylum claim dealt with here.

Application of New Provisions

The new arrangements will apply to existing applicants who have not been interviewed as well as to all new applicants for asylum from that date. Existing applicants have been issued with an information notice, which

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provides an outline of the new arrangements for processing applications for refugee status. For further information contact:

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
72-76, St. Stephens Green, Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6028202 Fax: 01 6615461
Email: info@justice.ie

SECTION 2: POLICY DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION LAUNCHED

On 27 August Minister Mary Coughlan launched the **National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion**, a blueprint for action on poverty and social exclusion to build a fairer society. The main priority objectives identified in the NAPincl plan are to:

- Pursue sound economic and fiscal policies, which will help maintain competitiveness, reduce inflation and sustain high levels of employment, as the key prerequisite to providing the resources for continued high levels of social and public services investment;
- Maintain and increase employment participation, improve the quality of jobs, remove disincentives by "making work pay", improve employability through education, training and lifelong learning, assist in reconciling work and family life including through child care provision;
- Increase levels of social welfare payments in real terms and improve access to, and standards, in the main public services; and
- Provide focused and tailored support for vulnerable people and to combat the risks of exclusion such as homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse and urban and rural disadvantage.

The plan covers the period 2003-05 and is a further step in Ireland's drive, to meet the EU goal of making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by 2010. Copies are available from:

Department of Social & Family Affairs
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada, Store Street, Dublin 1
Tel: 01 7043000 Email: info@welfare.ie

SECTION 3: ROUND-UP

NEW REPORT CALLS FOR TO INCREASED IRISH SOCIAL

EXPENDITURE TO ACHIEVE POVERTY REDUCTION

A new report launched by the Combat Poverty Agency has highlighted that more extensive social spending is required to achieve greater poverty reduction. This is especially the case in Ireland because of the extent of income inequality. The report, *Irish Social Expenditure in a Comparative International Context*, was written by Dr. Virpi Timonen, who lectures in Social Studies in Trinity College.

The report details that between 1989 and 1999, social security transfers as a percentage of GDP in Ireland fell from 14.2% in 1989 to 9.6% in 1999. Ireland has been converging towards the US, which was standing at 12.6% of GDP in 1996 (the latest figure available). This contrasts with Germany in the same period (increased from 15.7% to 18.9%), Spain (increased from 15.4% to 17.2%) and Sweden, which experienced a slight drop from 19.4% to 18.9%. The average for the EU over this period stayed broadly the same, at 16.9% in 1989 and 16.8% in 1999.

Between 1994 and 2000 relative income poverty rates have increased from 15.6% to 22.1%. This report highlights that the Irish social support system has to work harder to reduce poverty and inequality. It highlights that social expenditure has failed to keep up with our economic growth. The report concludes that for a well-developed country, Ireland has a low level of welfare effort. Copies are available, costing €8.00 from:

Institute of Public Administration
Vergemount Hall, Clonskeagh, Dublin 6
Tel: 01 2403600 Email: sales@ipa.ie

FINAL PHASE OF NATIONAL ALCOHOL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

On 8 October, the Minister for Health and Children, Mr Mícheál Martin T.D. launched the final phase of the **National Alcohol Awareness Campaign (2001-2003)** *Think Before You Drink - Less is More*.

The key features of this phase include:

- The first international alcohol comparison on Alcohol Consumption, *Irish Drinking Culture of 2002: Drinking and Related Harm: A European Comparison*. This study provides some further interesting facts regarding the issue of alcohol.
- A CD Single called **A Hundred Thousand Angels**, by Sinead O'Connor, also included on the She Who Dwells album. The purpose of the single is to

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highlight the impact of alcohol on young women by giving all the profits of the CD to Barnardos, Ireland's leading children's charity, because of the work they do in services around alcohol.

- A booklet ***A Guide to Rethinking Your Drinking*** intended as a resource for the general public and also for Health Professionals who may wish to stimulate discussion with their clients on drinking habits and on how to cut down. Will be circulated to G.P.'s, Addiction Counsellors, Health Promotion practitioners and other groups nationwide.
- ***A Little Book on Women and Alcohol***. Tiny book written about alcohol, especially for women. It will be circulated widely throughout Ireland, including to National Women Council of Ireland affiliates, every Well Woman Centre, every college and to each social welfare office in the country.

FINANCIAL REPORTING FOR NON PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

The management of charities and other non-profit organisations often have limited comparative information against which to benchmark their own organisation's governing structures or the adequacy of their financial reporting procedures.

A new report for Price Waterhouse Coopers, aimed specifically at the not-for-profit sector, provides comparative benchmarks for non-profit organisations operating in Ireland on issues such as:

- **The board of directors/trustees** - do the boards of Irish non-profit organisations operate within best practice guidelines relating to structure, constitution, composition, monitoring and appointments?
- **Accountability and risk** - how do non-profit organisations ensure that all major risks are identified and the systems in place to mitigate those risks?
- **Financial reporting and disclosure** - does the information provided by non-profit organisations in their annual report or financial statements meet the level of disclosure recommended under Statement of Recommended Practice 2 and other laws and regulations?
- **Internal control** - are the control procedures adequate to allow the boards of directors/trustees of these organisations to meet their monitoring and control responsibilities.

The report can be downloaded in pdf format from:

www.pwc.com/extweb/service.nsf/docid/A107DFDC C5321E8C80256D340055F269

COMBAT POVERTY AGENCY LIBRARY AWARENESS BULLETIN

The CPA Library Current Awareness Bulletin, July - September 2003 is now available online. It lists articles in social policy and social inclusion journals received by the library during this quarter. Copies of any of the articles listed can be acquired by downloading the bulletin in Word format, completing a form and returning it to CPA. To access the current and previous issues go to: www.combatpoverty.ie/lib_awareness.html

NEW DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION COMMUNITY RESOURCE

'World Wise' is a resource for Adult Learning that introduces development education, encourages people to think, discuss & debate, improves reading & writing skills, encourages thinking on a more just & equal world. Produced by NALA, Trocaire and the Clare VEC Adult Literacy Scheme it aims to make the basic link between individuals and communities, no matter where they live and how different their lives are.

The pack can be adapted to suit different learner needs, interests and levels of literacy and will:

- Introduce adult basic education learners to development education themes and issues;
- Present these themes in a way that encourages people to think about, discuss and debate issues;
- Allow learners to improve their reading and writing skills; and
- Give learners the chance to think about how they can create a more just and equal world.

For more information about World Wise contact:

Fergus Dolan

Tel: 01 8099191 Email: dolan@nala.ie

**Copies of all publications and documentation
highlighted in this edition are available for
reference or loan purposes from the
Irish YouthWork Centre**