

SECTION 1: POLICY & LEGISLATION

GROWING UP IN IRELAND STUDY COMPLETES FIRST WAVE OF DATA COLLECTION

On 11th September 2008 the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews T.D., launched the rollout of *Growing Up in Ireland – The Infant Cohort*, marking the beginning of research with 10,000 nine-month-old infants and their parents from across Ireland.

Research with the families will get underway in the coming days and continue until early next year with approximately 1,500 families invited to take part each month. The 10,000 families invited to take part in this stage of the study will be selected randomly from the Child Benefit Register.

To ensure a complete picture of each child is created, an in-depth interview will be conducted with the infant's parents who will be asked questions about their child's health, development and daily routines as well as the parents' own health, lifestyle and family life. These same children will be revisited when they are three-years-old, to see how they will have grown and how their lives will have changed in the interim.

Launched in January 2007, Growing Up in Ireland is a Government funded study following the progress of over 18,000 children – a cohort of 8,500 nine year olds and a cohort of 10,000 nine month olds. The aim of the study is to paint a full picture of children in Ireland today and to understand what factors affect children's development and wellbeing. The study is being conducted by a consortium of researchers led by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin.

As well as launching the rollout of the infant study, today's event also marked the completion of the first wave of data collection with the Nine-Year Cohort which involved interviewing 8,500 nine-year-olds, their parents, teachers and Principals.

Research with the Nine-Year cohort began in the first half of 2007 when 8,500 children were selected randomly through the National School system. Participation involved both a school and home component.

Each study child was asked to sit the Drumcondra test in English and Maths in school. In addition information about the child and their school was collected from the class teacher and school Principal. The study then

moved into the homes of the children where separate questionnaires were filled out by the study child and his/her parent or parents. These children will be visited again when they are 13 years old.

As the fieldwork with the Nine-Month Cohort gets underway, work is now ongoing on the analysis of the data collected from the Nine-Year Cohort and the first in a series of Growing Up in Ireland reports is due to be published next Spring.

The first report will focus on describing the lives of nine-year-old children in Ireland today and will present finding on areas such as family context, parenting, health and educational development.

Those wishing to find out more about the study can visit the study's website, www.growingup.ie or can **Freephone 1800 200 434**.

For further information please contact:

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Communications Officer
Growing Up in Ireland
Tel: 01 896 3378
Mobile: 087 9016880**

NATIONAL REVIEW OF COMPLIANCE WITH CHILDREN FIRST LAUNCHED

On 31st July 2008 Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Barry Andrews TD, launched the **National review of compliance with Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children**.

The key finding of the National review of compliance with Children First conducted was that, in general, difficulties and variations on implementation of the guidelines arise as a result of local variation and infrastructural issues, rather than from fundamental difficulties with the guidelines themselves.

The Minister promised to follow up on the recommendations of this review, through its interaction with key stakeholders.

The Minister also launched two further documents, which accompany the National Review of Compliance with Children First:

- **Analysis of submissions made on National Review of Compliance with Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children;**

- **Service users' perceptions of the Irish Child Protection System by Dr. Helen Buckley.**

Speaking about service users' perceptions, the author Dr. Helen Buckley found that:

- Overall, and in line with research in other countries, on first contact, statutory child protection services are viewed as unsympathetic, powerful and intimidating. This is largely due to preconceived ideas and attitudes as well as conflicting views about what constitutes adequate parenting
- Service users held some misinformed views of the powers of social workers to remove their children from them; an overarching fear experienced by the majority of those reported to the system
- Some users found it difficult to get a response from services, even when they were seriously worried about their children, particularly in situations of domestic violence and where parents had separated in acrimonious circumstances
- Young interviewees expressed frustration at the length of time they had to wait for services. In a number of cases, negative perceptions were modified once service users engaged with the services
- A number of interviewees were very dissatisfied with the way that mistaken or malicious reports about them were handled
- Although direct help, support and advice were valued, service users tended to define the quality of services principally on the manner in which they were delivered. Where calls were not returned, or arrangements breached by child protection staff, service users found this to be insulting and degrading.

All three documents are available for loan through the Irish YouthWork Centre

For further information contact:

**Office of the Minister for Children
and Youth Affairs
Hawkins House
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6354000
Email: omc@health.gov.ie
Web: www.omc.gov.ie**

CHARITIES BILL UPDATE

After a significant delay since the Third (Committee) Stage in January, the Fourth (Report) Stage of the Charities Bill is due to be taken in the Dáil on Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th October.

An update on this stage of the Bill will follow in the next edition of this update.

For a comprehensive update on the progress of the Bill to date contact:

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ISFC, 10 Grattan Crescent
Inchicore, Dublin 8.
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Email: ivan@wheel.ie
Website: www.wheel.ie**

SECTION 2: FUNDING

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GRANTS PROGRAMME 2008

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs is inviting applications from community and voluntary organisations for funding under two programmes of grants.

Programme 1: offers two schemes of once off grants:

Scheme of Refurbishment Grants

Grants will be made to a range of local community and voluntary organisations with a focus on addressing disadvantage or where evidence of need has been clearly identified in their communities.

Scheme of Equipment Grants

The objective of this scheme is to support the activities of local community and voluntary organisations that are addressing disadvantage in their communities.

Programme 2: Scheme of Training Grants

The aim of the Programme is to support or enhance the activities of community and voluntary groups both national and local or community based.

Part funding for these grants comes from the National Lottery and Pobal are administering both programmes on behalf of the Department. Applicant groups are asked to carefully consider the published guidelines, to attend an information seminar if possible, and to consider their suitability before making an application.

This funding is solely targeted at community and voluntary organisations and is provided on a once-off basis.

Applications will be accepted on official forms which are available on the Pobal website along with further guidance for applicants at www.pobail.ie

Application forms and further information are available from:

**Pobal,
Holbrook House
Holles Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 4484888**

CREDIT UNIONS & SPUNOUT.IE VIDEO CLIP COMPETITION

Credit unions in Ireland and SpunOut.ie, the national youth website, have launched a youth video clip competition entitled 'What I Love About My Place'.

The competition asks entrants to record a 60 second video clip on what makes their place special. 'My Place' might be their local village, town or city. It might be their sports club, their school maybe even their local credit union.

Entries to the competition can be recorded on a mobile phone, camcorder, digital camera etc. They can be creative, quirky or humorous so long as they don't use any inappropriate or copyrighted content – and they get permission from anyone featured in the clip.

€10,000 in cash prizes is available to be won. First Prize is €4,000; Second Prize €2,500; Third Prize €1,500.

Visitors to www.yourplace.ie will have a chance to vote for their favourite video. The owner of the most popular video will win a Viewers' Choice Award – a cash prize of €2,000.

Entries will be hosted on a dedicated You Tube page. **The closing date for submission of entries is 31st October 2008.**

Additional information on the competition is available at:

www.yourplace.ie

SECTION 3: ROUND-UP

MONITORING CUTBACKS IN FRONTLINE SERVICES

The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice is piloting a new addition to its website to highlight and monitor frontline services that have experienced cutbacks or closure.

The information on the website will highlight the social costs that these closures and cutbacks are having on some of the most marginalised and voiceless members in Irish Society.

A number of projects working with the most vulnerable in Irish society have had their funding cut and been forced to close down. Other projects and services have had their funds reduced and more will be in a similar position following the recent Budget.

The pilot web database will list organisations affected and the:

- Number of users and staff (social cost)
- Geographical location and target users
- Funding cuts (economic cost)

It is hoped that this service will highlight the profile of organisations affected by recent cutbacks.

If you know of or if the organisation/project that you are working with has experienced funding cutbacks or closure please contact Lena or Eoin at:

**Tel: 01 8556814
Email: cutbacks@jcfj.ie
Website: www.jcfj.ie/cutbacks**

**Copies of all publications and
documentation highlighted in this
edition are available for reference or
loan purposes from the Irish
YouthWork Centre
Tel: 01 8729933
Email: fbissett@youthworkireland.ie
Website: www.iywc.com**