



PRESS RELEASE

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CONTINUATION OF FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRES IS WELCOME, BUT MANY CHALLENGES LAY AHEAD - FRCNF

The decision of the government to continue the Family Resource Centre (FRC) Programme and the Family Support Agency has been welcomed by the Family Resource Centre National Forum, (FRCNF). However, the organisation said that the overall social welfare cuts in the budget present many challenges for the communities they operate in.

The Forum outlined its response today to Wednesday's budget at the organisation's Annual Conference, which took place in the Camden Court Hotel, Dublin 2 this weekend. The McCarthy report had recommended closing the Family Support Agency, which delivers 107 FRCs across Ireland.

According to the FRCNF Chair, Packie Kelly, "FRCs are hugely relieved with Minister Hanafin's announcement that there will be no cut in funding to FRCs or The Family Support Agency. Since the McCarthy report recommendations were published earlier this year, there was a great deal of fear in FRCs and the communities they represent that the vital supports they provide would be removed. FRCs nationwide engaged with local public representatives and the wider public through the media to build support for the survival of the FRC programme.

Mr Kelly said that although there is a huge sigh of relief in FRCs, they remain cognisant of the challenges they face in the coming year. "The people that FRCs serve are among those hit most by this budget. Reductions in social welfare payments and the continuing jobs crisis will put families under increased pressure, and more than ever, our services will be needed.

"We have also made a commitment to Minister Hanafin that FRCs will take on extra duties, in particular around the areas of one parent families, drug and alcohol addiction, and the role of grandparents in the lives of young children. We are happy to meet these challenges, but are under no illusions that it will put our organisations under increased pressure."

Mr Kelly also stated that the 'reprieve' for Family Resource Centres in no ways secures their long term future. "None of us can tell what lies ahead due to the economic crisis we find ourselves in. Budget 2010 will be upon us in less that twelve months, and in that time we must ensure that we continue to provide a value for money solution to problems in our communities, and that we build on the overwhelming support we have received from government, public representatives and the wider public.

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