



PRESS RELEASE

ELECTION CANDIDATES IN THE WEST SHOULD SUPPORT WORK OF FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRES

Family Resource Centres in the West have said that they would be looking for a political commitment from all general election candidates from the region to support their work, and enable them expand programmes and activities over the next three years.

The call came following last week's launch of a three-year strategic plan for the National Forum of Family Resource Centres that will inform their work to the end of 2009. The launch, which took place in Dublin, was attended by representatives of the ten -strong family resource centres in the Western Region.

The plan – entitled *Supporting Families, Building Communities* – was launched by the Minister for Social & Family Affairs, Seamus Brennan TD. During the launch, the Minister said that he was committed to supporting and expanding family resource centres.

"While we welcome the Minister's support for the work of family resource centres, we know that a general election is just around the corner. For this reason, we are very keen that all election candidates – who have any intention of forming a Government – take note of our important work. Supporting the role of family resource centres should be a lynch-pin of community and family policies in all political manifestos," says Anne O'Shaughnessy, Clann Resource Centre, Oughterard, who attended last week's launch.

There are ten centres in the region and we are delivering and supporting a wide range of initiatives, including programmes and supports for: youth, lone parents, young families, new communities, the elderly, travellers, the unemployed/underemployed, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. Other areas of work include adult and community education/training, affordable counselling, community childcare, after school programmes, community arts and rural transport initiatives, just to mention a few."

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“The new strategic plan for the National Forum of Family Resource Centres will mean that family resource centres will become a much stronger voice at local, regional and national fora.

“To help promote more family-friendly policies and initiatives here in the West, we will be participating on an increased number of policy-formation bodies, and seeking representation on local and regional advisory committees. Issues including childcare provision and support for vulnerable and disadvantaged families will be central to our work,” added Anne.

ENDS.

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