

**11/8/08**

### **Proposal to engage facilitators for lone parents**

Most lone parents want to engage in the workforce but face many obstacles in doing so, not least, lack of skills and confidence, lack of affordable accessible childcare, loss of secondary benefits such as rent allowance, medical card etc.

For Mary Hanafin, T.D., Minister for Social and Family Affairs to engage facilitators to provide one to one advice and support to lone parents is a positive and welcome step. It is important however that the facilitators have an understanding of the difficulties of raising a child alone and the ethos underpinning their work will need to be supportive and not coercive. Earlier proposals emanating from the Department included compelling lone parents to return to work when their youngest child reached a specified age – 8 years was generally agreed by the officials. We note that the Minister believes eight might be too young. Treoir questions the need to fix on a particular age. The experience is that when the time is right for them and their children lone parents make huge efforts to return to work, despite the obstacles. With the support of the facilitators lone parents may be helped to participate in education and will be ready to take up employment which will lift them out of poverty when their children are well settled in school.

“Work it Out” a booklet to help lone parents receiving One-Parent Family Payment to look at the options/schemes which are available when considering (re)entering the workforce, education or training is available from Treoir LoCall: 1890 252 084 or from the website [www.treoir.ie](http://www.treoir.ie).

Margaret Dromey, CEO of Treoir said “I look forward to the other measures proposed in “Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents” being implemented, in particular the proposal to remove the bar to cohabitation. It is important that the social welfare system is not an obstacle to parents coming together to jointly parent their children. Such a system is surely not in the best interest of children”.

For further information contact

Margaret Dromey, CEO  
(Mob) 087 2263 163  
(Office) 01 6700 1230