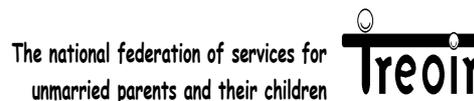


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Two national support organisations plea for no cutbacks in welfare payments to one-parent families

Two national lone parent organisations, OPEN and Treoir, make an unprecedented joint appeal to the Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Ms. Mary Hanafin, T.D. at her Department's annual Pre-Budget Forum in Dublin today (Friday, October 9, 2009) .

Frances Byrne of OPEN and Margot Doherty of Treoir are telling the Minister that their two organisations have come together for the first time to make a united plea for no reductions to social welfare payments. *“A report by the ESRI commissioned by the Department of Social and Family Affairs paints a graphic picture of the disadvantaged position of one parent families”*, said Ms. Byrne *“and it shows that lone parents and our children are much more likely to live in poverty than any other family”*. Ms. Doherty stated that *“The current rate of One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) is just barely adequate. Any cut in social welfare would put enormous pressure on families already stretched to the limit. It would be unfair to ask the poorest families to pay for the mistakes of the rich. We are aware from the calls to our national helpline that families are already worrying about possible cuts”*, Ms. Doherty added.

In their joint Budget 2010 submission, the organisations have also urged the Minister to reinstate the Christmas Bonus which provides families with a much needed extra week's payment. *“If it is not available it will push one-parent families into the hands of money-lenders and they will be forced to pay exorbitant interest rates for very small loans”*, concluded Ms. Byrne.

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Note to Editors:

Since 1973 **Treoir** has been promoting the rights and welfare of unmarried parents and their children in Ireland. We provide a National Information Service to unmarried families and those involved with them and receive approximately 9,000 queries per year.

OPEN is the national network of one-parent families. Since 1994 we have supported up to 92 local groups to provide services and supports to one-parent families in communities throughout Ireland. We also represent one-parent families in social partnership and other policy arenas.