

11/08/2010

Social Welfare Fraud

Treoir, the national federation of services for unmarried parents and children, is concerned that the revelation of fraud on the part of some welfare recipients, including lone parents will result in all lone parents being vilified and scapegoated by society, though the vast majority are compliant and do a great job against all the odds.

Lone parents on welfare like other welfare families struggle to make ends meet. A significant number of them work to supplement their basic welfare payments and may become ineligible because of earnings increases. Sometimes they are unaware of the impact of increased earnings on welfare entitlement. Treoir over many years has appealed to the Department of Social and Family Affairs to simplify and streamline the whole social welfare system. The interaction between welfare and work is complex and staff at the Treoir National Information Centre spend a great deal of time helping parents to navigate the social welfare system.

In some cases 'lone parents' were deemed to have defrauded the system because there were cohabiting. A social welfare system that discourages parents from living together is flawed and surely not generally in the best interest of children who after all have a right to be parented by both parents.

The inadequacies of the social welfare system were recognized in the report "Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents and Other Low Income Families" which was supported by Government. Treoir is anxious that the report is not left to gather dust but is acted upon by Minister Mary Hanafin and her Department. Some modifications are required but there is now an opportunity to radically overhaul the way lone parents are treated in the welfare system.

Margaret Dromey,
CEO,
Treoir.

01 6700 120
087 2263164