



One-parent families lose out hugely in today's budget

For immediate release
9th December 2009

OPEN, Ireland's national organisation for lone parents, today expressed disappointment at the Budget 2010 announcement. "Lone parents and their children have effectively been left out in the cold." said Frances Byrne, Director.

"While noting that we have been told poor families will be compensated for the decrease in child benefit, we are unclear as to how this will happen for those on Family Income Supplement (FIS). We would like the government to remember that poor children do not exist in isolation. They grow up in poor households, with poor parents. And we know that lone parent households are defined as economically vulnerable; today's budget will cement this position", stated Ms. Byrne, "Furthermore any lone parents wishing to move off welfare and into work will now be discouraged from doing this as they will then find their child benefit reduced; this creates another poverty trap within a system which is already deeply flawed".

"The cumulative of previous cuts, like the ending of the Christmas payment and the new 4% reduction (€8.51 per week) means that one-parent families will move into further poverty next year. We already know that even as recently as 2008 lone parents were the poorest of the poor in Ireland, not able to heat their homes properly or afford new clothes. The impact of other proposals such as the changes to prescription charges and the cruel cut to Jobseekers' payments for young adults will also punish low income families", concluded Byrne.

Ends/

For further information please contact

Frances Byrne 086 8143297
Niamh O'Carroll 087 628 6171

Note for Editors:

OPEN is the national network of community-based lone parent groups. The organisation provides a range of development programmes to build the capacity of our membership; OPEN also represents one-parent families in social partnership and elsewhere. OPEN was established in 1994; member groups now support between 10,000-15,000 one-parent families per year. The organisation is led by a Board made up exclusively of lone parents.

The most recent figures¹ on poverty and social exclusion show the following about one-parent families in Ireland:

- Nearly one in five people in lone parent households (17.8%) were in consistent poverty in 2008, the highest rate recorded among household types.
- Lone parent households continued to be the household type with the highest 'at risk of poverty' rate with a rate of 36.4% being recorded for individuals in these households
- Lone parent households reported the highest deprivation levels of any household type with nearly one quarter (24.2%) of individuals in these households experiencing three or more of the eleven deprivation items in 2008.

¹ **CSO, 2009: Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2008**

The Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) is an annual survey conducted by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) to obtain information on the income and living conditions of different types of households. The survey also collects information on poverty and social exclusion. A representative random sample of households throughout the country is approached to provide the required information. The survey is voluntary from a respondent's perspective; nobody can be compelled to co-operate.