

ENDCHILDPOVERTY COALITION

Dublin, April 19th 2011.

The End Child Poverty Coalition is calling on the Government to make ending child poverty a priority as it launched its 'Child Poverty: Ireland in Recession' pamphlet. Despite promises to eradicate child poverty during the boom years, increasing numbers of children and families are struggling daily with the effects of the recession. Child poverty rates increased in 2009, to over 96,000 children or one in eleven living in consistent poverty, a figure which is likely to have increased since then.

The End Child Poverty Coalition is made up of eight organisations who work with children and families experiencing poverty. These are Barnardos, Children's Rights Alliance, Focus Ireland, National Youth Council of Ireland, OPEN, Pavee Point, Start Strong and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

'Through our work we all see the affect that living in poverty has on children's lives. Though inadequate income is at the problem's core, it is the knock-on effects like exclusion from participation in everyday activities such as education and play, poor quality housing and delayed access to healthcare that make a real difference to children's lives. Childhood is time limited, and the longer a child lives in poverty the greater the impact on their development and their futures', said June Tinsley, Policy Officer, Barnardos.

The End Child Poverty Coalition welcomes the Programme for Government commitment to an area-based approach to child poverty and urges the Government to prioritise its roll-out. The Coalition also welcomes the commitment not to cut social welfare rates, but stresses the urgent need for a combination of investment in income supports and quality public services including health, education and housing.

'Child poverty is a complex, multi-dimensional problem. So too is its solution. It is essential to combine adequate adult and child income supports with access to quality public services. Investment in these services must be weighted towards prevention and early intervention approaches as this is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty. Such approaches show clear benefits in educational outcomes, mental and physical health, and social and emotional development for the child. Prevention and early intervention approaches are also more effective and less expensive than later interventions', said Toby Wolfe, Policy and Research Officer, Start Strong.

'Despite the economic and financial constraints, we urge this Government to provide the political leadership needed to end child poverty. Another generation of children should not have their lives characterised by intergenerational cycles of poverty and disadvantage. All children have the right to grow up free from poverty', added Maria Corbett, Policy Director, Children's Rights Alliance.

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For further information please contact:

June Tinsley – Barnardos – 01-7080440, 087 9955076

Toby Wolfe, Start Strong – 01-791010, 086 8159546

Maria Corbett, Children's Rights Alliance – 01- 6629400, 087 7835057