



CIC Social Policy Records Quarterly Report

April - June 2004

Introduction

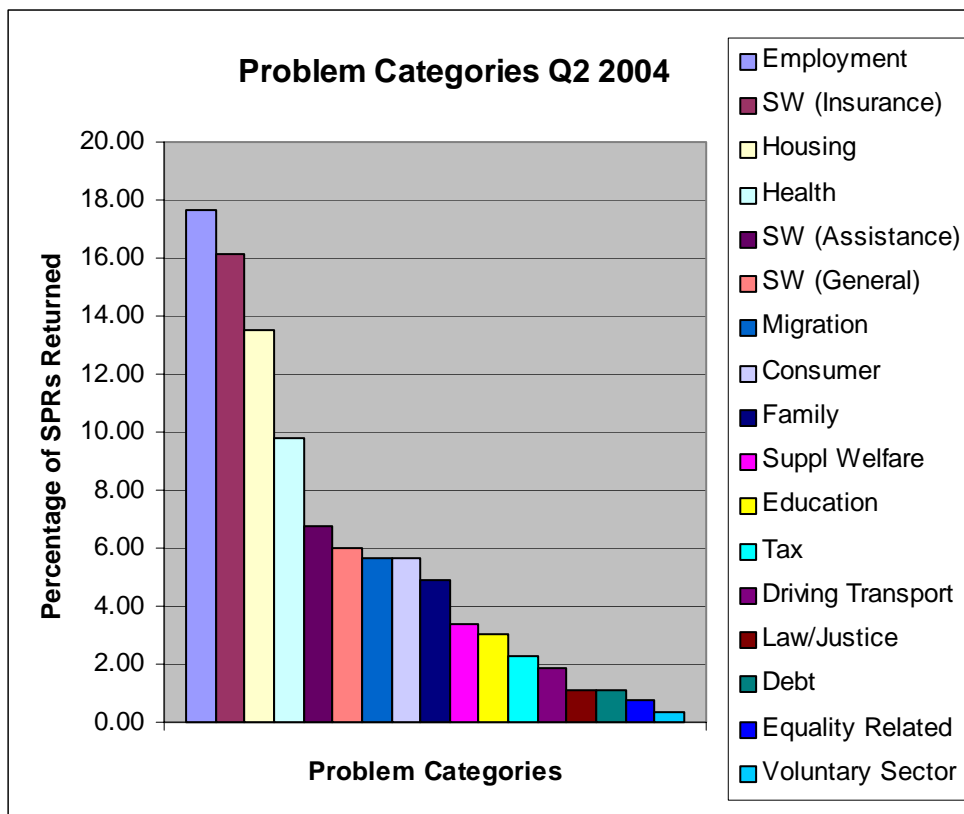
This quarterly report contains a review of the social policy records compiled by Citizens Information Centres around the country during the second quarter of 2004. The social policy records provided by CICs allow Comhairle to examine the nature of problems presented by clients as described in case studies. Where possible the data is translated into policy relevant findings, which are then used to inform the policymaking process.

The topics discussed below, broadly represent the issues arising in the social policy records. It should be noted that any views and /or recommendations contained in this report are those of the CIC concerned and have not been subjected to any broader policy analysis.

As in previous quarters, in April, May and June of 2004 the largest proportion of social policy records by far, related to employment. A large proportion of these related to employment rights and non-compliance with employment legislation. The need to ensure effective complaint and redress mechanisms against exploitation and discrimination in the workplace for migrant workers is now particularly urgent.

Issues relating to social welfare assistance and housing represent the second and third largest categories of concern for CIC/CIPS clients. Issues relating to social welfare assistance include long standing difficulties with eligibility for Carer's Allowance and the disincentives to work while collecting assistance payments. Problems experienced by clients of CIC's/CIPS concerning housing, include lengthy waiting lists for social housing and hardship created by Rent Supplement eligibility guidelines.

New problematic issues emerging include gaps in coverage for the self-employed in relation to social welfare assistance. Other issues, which continue to cause difficulties, include eligibility for the Medical Card and the Household Benefits Package.



Percentage of SPRs Returned Q2 2004

Long Standing Persistent Issues

***Employment**

***Employment Rights**

***Work Permits**

Clare (Shannon CIC) 01/04/04

During the month of April four Filipino women visited the Shannon CIC. These women had recently joined their husbands who had come to Ireland on the Work Permit Scheme. All of the women wanted to take up work for the duration of their stay in Ireland. The women became very upset when conditions governing dependants on the Work Permit system were explained to them. The women believed they would be entitled to work under the changes brought in, in January 2004, for the spouses of Filipino nurses.

These women stressed that they were accustomed to working outside the home in their native country. Not only was it acceptable for these women to work in the Philippines it was expected of them. In a similar case a Nigerian woman who visited the centre was under the same misapprehension and was disappointed to discover she was not eligible to seek employment.

The information provider in Shannon suggested the women attempt to source employment in a nursing home and that if the employer was willing to apply for a Work Permit for them they might be permitted to work. The information

provider noted however “*Unfortunately that type of work is not readily available in this area*”.

Leitrim (Carrick-on-Shannon) 28/04/04

A group of male migrant workers approached the Carrick on Shannon CIC in relation to their status as work permit holders. The men’s Work Permits expired in August 2003. At this time the men sought, and received assurances from their employer that new work permits had been applied for. In April 2004 these men attempted to obtain copies of the new work permits from their employer. Each time one of them approached their employer they were told that he was “*too busy at the moment*”.

Carrick on Shannon contacted the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment on this matter and were advised that the migrant workers should contact the local Immigration Officer. The clients’ did as they were advised, and were subsequently informed by the Immigration officer that he would contact their employer.

The information provider dealing with the case noted that the men were always paid in cash, and never received pay slips. Their employer also forbade them from leaving their place of residence once they returned from work each day. The information provider commented “*Those conditions are not acceptable and this is not an isolated incident*”

Offaly (Tullamore CIC) 02/04/04

A married client with two children approached Tullamore CIC alleging that his employer treated him very badly. Recalling the details of this case, the information provider involved believed the man’s employer was in breach of several laws governing employment, tax, and equality rights:

- Payment of Wages – The client alleged the employer left his wages short on numerous occasions.
- Payment of Holidays – The employee alleges he was told that he would only be entitled to two weeks holidays per year and would only be paid for one.
- Revenue (Tax) – The client also claimed that his wages were taxed. When he changed employment his P45 did not reflect these deductions.
- The client also alleged that his employer told him he would have to pay for his Work Permit and so deducted this from his wages.
- The employee, who is Polish, complained that he had been verbally abused, including name calling, by another employee.
- The client alleged that his employer threatened to withdraw his Work Permit unless he carried out another employee's tasks as well as his own. He also complained that his employer told him if he didn't work fast enough he would be sent back to Poland.

In addition to the breaches of law and abuse of civil rights mentioned above the client explained that upon his family’s arrival in the country, the employer

offered to lend him €650 as a deposit on accommodation. The employee paid this back to the employer but when he left the accommodation to move somewhere better, the landlord gave the €650 back to his employer. The client alleged that the employer did not give this money back to him but loaned him another deposit for the new accommodation and continued to deduct this deposit from the employee's wages.

The client believed this treatment led to his becoming depressed. The client's wife also became very depressed and he said she tried to hang herself. It was only when the man's wife was hospitalized that their story came to light. Upon hearing of their plight another employer offered alternate employment.

The client has been through so much already. He does not want an investigation at this time. However we assisted the employee write a letter to the employer requesting payment of monies owed. If the employer does not pay this money the employee may consider an investigation. The employer took advantage of the employee and treated him very badly. This case highlights the need for change in Work Permit procedures. As it stands, policy governing successful applications allows unscrupulous employers to take advantage of vulnerable employees. This situation needs to be changed. Work Permits should be given to employees.

This case study was supplied to Comhairle as part of an assessment on the Accredited Training Programme 2004 for Information Providers organised by the Comhairle Training & Development Team.

Louth (Dundalk CIC) 06/04/04

In October 2003 a young Indian man visited Dundalk Citizen's Information Centre with a friend whom he needed to interpret for him, as he had very little English. The client had entered the country on a Work Permit and in his employment to date had been working seven days per week and up to twelve hours per day. At no point did he receive holidays or holiday pay. At one point the client requested one week's holiday from his employer in order to return home to see his sister who had cancer. He was refused.

Subsequently the client had his Work Permit renewed. At this point he decided to confront his employer and informed him that he was no longer willing to work the same unreasonable hours. The following day his employer called to his house and demanded the client hand over his Work Permit, his Passport and his ID Card. The client was very distressed but was unwilling to hand over anything other than the work permit. That evening the local Immigration Garda arrived at the client's house and seized his Passport and ID Card and ordered him to leave the country within four days.

It was at this stage that the information provider at Dundalk CIC intervened. The information provider accompanied the client when he went to speak to the local Immigration Garda to see what could be done. It transpired, upon meeting with the Garda, that he was unaware of the conditions this man had

been working under, as he did not have anyone to interpret for him. The Indian man's employer had told the Immigration Garda that he had refused to work for him and that he wanted to have him deported.

The information provider noted that if the client had not visited the CIC he might have been deported as a direct result of something as simple as a language barrier. The information provider also commented on the fact that the Garda did not seek to investigate the matter further. The information provider subsequently contacted FAS and the Work Permit Section of the DETE and informed them of the employee's working conditions. "*The employer continues to obtain Work Permits for Indian employees*".

***Employment**

***Employment Rights**

***Abuses perpetrated by employers**

05/04/04 Roscommon (Roscommon CIC)

An information provider at Roscommon CIC submitted a social policy record highlighting the need to increase awareness among employees regarding their rights and entitlements. "*More effective ways of transmitting information directly to those who need it should be explored*".

The impetus for the social policy record submitted was a case involving a large employer in the service sector in County Roscommon who was employing a number of non-union staff members. The employees' written contracts specified an entitlement to only three weeks' holidays per year, which runs contrary to the statutory entitlement to four weeks. The information provider confirmed this with a member of staff at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The contracts were, therefore, illegal. The information provider noted that the company had committed similar abuses of employment rights over a number of years and that the employees were not only unaware of where they might access information about their rights, they assumed that the terms specified in their contracts were fair and correct.

21/05/04 Kildare (Newbridge CIC)

A single parent was let go from her job after just nine months. The client alleged that no reason was given for dismissal. Having waited three months to receive her P45 from her employer, she finally approached the Newbridge CIC. The client explained that her former employer assured her he would send it out, but she never received it. She is awaiting a back payment from the Family Income Supplement section of the DSFA. Staff there refused to issue a payment to the client without her P45. They also queried her entitlement to the supplement suggesting her claim was a fraudulent one. The information provider highlights the vulnerable position some employees may find themselves in, as the persons' ability to claim certain social welfare payments relies heavily on the good will of their former employers.

"Depending on the employer an employee may be left indefinitely waiting for their P45. It is not the employer who incurs the penalties for refusing to supply

a P45, it is the employee who loses out on Social Welfare benefits or who finds they must pay emergency tax for a period of time. Enforcement of employment legislation, which protects the rights of employees, is needed”.

Longford (Longford CIC) 01/04/04

An employee of a grocery shop approached Longford CIC with a query regarding minimum leave entitlements. The client worked for over 30 years in the same business and felt that she had always been treated fairly with regard to the number of hours worked / rest breaks / holidays etc. However the grocery shop had come under new management a couple of years previously and the employee realised that her entitlements had been altered. Under the new management the client worked 7 days a week (32 hours per week), 52 weeks of the year and was not receiving pay or time off in lieu of public holidays instead she received 9 days annual leave. She had never made a complaint about an employer in the past and was reluctant to do so at this time but she felt she would never receive her full share of entitlements unless she pursued the matter further. Her new employer paid her for 20 hours of work a week 'through the books' and the balance as 'cash in hand'. The employer is also attempting to discourage the employee from seeking extra pay for public holidays etc by advising her that if she does so she will lose the Medical Card.

***Employment**

***Rehabilitative Work**

***Application Processing Delays**

17/05/04 Donegal (Donegal Town IIU)

A 40-year-old woman in receipt of Disability Benefit was accepted onto a FAS course as it was acknowledged the course would be beneficial for her rehabilitation. However the woman had to be examined by the Department of Social and Family Affairs medical officer as a condition of the offer.

The client applied to the Department under the exemption 5 clause. She heard nothing from the Department for 5 weeks. When the client contacted her local Social Welfare office they gave her the phone number of the Disability Benefit section in Longford. When she called the section the client alleged she was put on hold for 30 minutes. Having waited thirty minutes the woman was told that her request was refused and she would be required to meet a medical Officer. The staff member at the disability benefit section could not tell the client when this might happen.

In the meantime the FAS course entry deadline was approaching. Co-ordinators of the course agreed to give the client one week's grace to sort out her difficulties. Once again the client made contact with the DB section and she alleged that she was kept waiting on the phone for a further 20 minutes. Once again no decision was made. The client then contacted Donegal Town IIU and the information provider involved in the case contacted the Dublin help line. The staff at the Dublin help line promised they would make efforts to gain permission for the lady to attend the course while arranging an appointment with the medical officer at a later date.

This resolution took 6 weeks. The information worker involved in this case wondered why the Disability Section could not have made this decision at an earlier stage, thus sparing the expense of lengthy phone calls. Regrettably the department contacted the client yet again, a week later and reversed this decision. The woman alleged that they told her she would have to make her own way to Dublin to see the medical officer. As a result of the overturned decision the client lost her place on the course.

- *Social Welfare Assistance
- *Unemployment Assistance
- *Disincentives to Work

(Dublin) Swords CIC 01/04/04

An information provider highlighted the plight of a family visiting Swords CIC. The family, consisting of two parents and three children were living in rented accommodation in north Dublin and paying rent of €1,200 per month. The father of the family worked in full-time employment and earned €1,456 per month. The family was forced to survive on **€256 per month**. The information provider felt that the family was living below the poverty line as a direct result of inflated housing costs.

Under current regulations governing supplementary welfare allowance this family is not entitled to apply for Rent Supplement to assist in the payment of their rent because the household head is in full-time employment and as such would be regarded as ineligible. Conditions governing successful application for SWA payments do not take the amount of income earned into consideration.

The information officer involved in this case noted that if this family were in receipt of Unemployment Assistance or Supplementary Welfare Allowance, their weekly income would be €274.60 of which only €13.00 would be required to pay their rent. This would leave an income of **€261.60 per week**. *“This family is being penalized for taking up full-time work on low pay. The family is entitled to apply for Family Income Supplement; however, this will only increase their weekly income by €85.00 bringing their total weekly income to €144.00, over €125 worse off compared with a similar family on welfare.”*

The information provider involved in this case made a number of recommendations on how to improve the qualifying criteria for Rent Supplement in order that families most in need might benefit.

“Every case for Supplementary Welfare should be looked at individually. This family would be better off financially on UA or SWA, which is precisely how the social welfare system should not be operating. I recommend that if a family applies for Rent Supplement, where one spouse is in employment, their income less housing costs should be assessed. If this amount falls below the Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate, Rent Supplement should be paid to bring the family's weekly income in line with the SWA rate less housing costs”.

Donegal (Dungloe IIU) 30/04/04

A woman claiming Unemployment Assistance with her husband and children as dependants, was given an opportunity to work for a couple of hours per week, earning €80. The client had heard that a dependant could earn up to €88.88 a week without it affecting her payment but decided to visit a CIC for confirmation of this before taking up the position. The CIC worker involved in the case informed her that, because she was the claimant, her earnings would be means-tested and that she would lose 60% of her wages if she decided to work. The woman was shocked and commented that it was not worth her while going out to work. She could not understand why her husband had the opportunity to earn €80 a week without it affecting their payment but because she was the claimant the €80 would be means-tested. She also felt it was unfair that a single parent was entitled to earn up to €146 without it affecting their entitlement to One Parent Family Payment.

***Social Welfare Assistance**

***Carer's Allowance**

Donegal (Carndonagh IIU) 13/05/04

A client presented at Carndonagh IIU requesting information on the means test for Carer's Allowance. The woman's husband was working full-time and both were concerned about the effect his income might have on her eligibility for the Carer's Allowance payment. The information provider noted that the client was pleased to hear that, as a result of the recent increase in income disregards, she would be entitled to the full amount of the carer's allowance.

The client then asked about the possible effect the payment might have on the family's income tax liability. The family's income did not fall within the tax net at that time. She asked if the Carer's Allowance was classed as taxable income. The information provider at Carndonagh IIU informed the client that it was taxable, and that, according to their calculations, she would incur approximately €25 per week in tax.

The information provider involved in the case commented, *"This illustrates the lack of uniformity in approach by various statutory bodies. In this case, while the income from Carer's Allowance is disregarded for the purposes of the Medical Card, the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance and other schemes, it can be taxed, reducing a family's income by €25 per week. The fact that the Carer's Allowance itself is means-tested is sufficiently contentious without adding the burden of taxation"*.

06/05/04 Kilkenny (Kilkenny CIC)

A person in receipt of Contributory Old Age Pension is not entitled to claim Carers Allowance in addition to their pension. A client in this position approached Kilkenny CIC, as she receives no extra financial help in caring for her disabled husband. The information provider involved in the case noted that the client was *"providing a service, which would otherwise have to be provided by the State at great cost to the Exchequer."*

25/05/04 Dublin (City Centre North West Information Service CIC)

Following a talk on 'Information for Carers' a lady approached an Information Officer of City Centre North West Information Service to highlight her dissatisfaction with the treatment of carers. The lady in question was 67 years old and was caring for her brother who was 69 years old and had an intellectual disability. Before reaching the age of 66, the client had been in receipt of Carers Allowance. The woman's grievance stemmed from the fact that once she transferred to COAP at 66, she lost her entitlement to the annual Respite Care Grant despite the fact that she continued to care for her brother.

***Social Welfare General**
***Free Schemes**

A client, aged 66 on an occupational pension was very angry having been refused the Household Benefits Package and the Medical Card on the grounds that his income was too high. The client pointed out to the information provider involved with his case that he had paid into a pension scheme and contributed to the PRSI system all his working life but he felt now that the Government was punishing him for making private provision for his retirement.

"The Means Test for various schemes, such as the Medical Card and Household Benefits Package, help to alienate people nearing retirement age who have made provision for their retirement and create feelings of resentment toward those of the same age who have not made private pension arrangements and who are in receipt of such schemes".

***Social Welfare General**
***Household Benefits Package**

28/04/04 Donegal (Dungloe IIU)

Another client of Dungloe IIU was frustrated by the fact that she had to reapply for the Household Benefits Package upon changing address. The client was in receipt of a Disability Allowance and had been in receipt of the Household Benefit Package for a number of months. The woman was living in rented accommodation and had made the decision to move to a different area. Having made initial application for the Household Benefits Package the client was aware that there was a processing delay of up to six-weeks. The client felt it was unfair that she should lose the benefit while the application was processed again, especially when her eligibility for the payment had already been confirmed. Staff at Dungloe IIU felt that recipients' of the Household Benefits Package should not have to go through the entire process more than once and that this client was being penalized simply for changing address.

***Housing**
***Rent Allowance**
***Disincentive to Work**

27/05/04 Roscommon (Roscommon CIC)

A client in receipt of One Parent Family Payment was interested in taking up part-time employment. The client was not motivated by money necessarily, but rather by a desire for more social interaction. She wished to cultivate interests outside of the home.

While under the terms of the one parent family payment the client was entitled to earn what she considered to be a substantial amount of money without affecting her Payment, she was only allowed to earn €50 before her earnings would affect her Rent Allowance. The client did get a part-time job soon after visiting the Roscommon CIC, but the detrimental effect on her Rent Allowance was a sufficient disincentive to work as many hours as she originally planned. *“The lack of a commonality between SWA and Social Welfare eligibility criteria is problematic”*

***Health**

***Medical Card Eligibility**

29/04/04 Roscommon (Roscommon CIC)

A part-time worker, with three children, whose husband was unemployed, was disappointed to learn that the family would probably not qualify for a Medical Card under current income guidelines.

The family's total income was approximately €5 a week over the Western Health Boards' guideline figure. The client was particularly aggrieved that allowances were not made for those who were marginally over the prescribed figure. She decided to apply for the medical card anyway, but expressed the view that she would have a better chance of getting it if she approached a particular public representative. The client suggested that perhaps a restricted version of the medical card should be introduced by the Department to cater for families like hers. This card could entitle the holder to a limited number of services under the scheme.

***Education**

***Post-Leaving Cert courses**

***Childcare Costs**

18/05/04 Donegal (Letterkenny IIU)

A single parent enrolled in a VEC course approached Letterkenny IIU for information on the possibility of assistance with childcare. It was suggested that the client contact the VEC in relation to the crèche facilities there. The client explained that she had already done so but the VEC only provided places for parents over 21 years of age. This rule disqualified the client from applying. The CIC worker commented on the inequity of such a rule given the number of young mothers wishing to continue or return to education. *“Surely the service should be extended”*

Issues of Concern

***Employment**

***Employment Rights**

***Unfair Dismissal**

Kilkenny (Kilkenny CIC) 17/05/04

A Ukrainian national approached Kilkenny CIC. He had been working in the town for 3 years. The client claimed he was requested to work very long hours, with no overtime paid prior to December 2003. The man needed to leave work at 5pm on one occasion in order to attend a doctor's appointment at 5.30pm. The client claimed he informed his employer of his appointment. On the same day the client had begun work at 8am. The following morning his boss gave him the sack stating that he had only packed 350 units of product when his target was 500 as the reason. The information provider involved in the case contacted the Equality Authority. In the social policy record submitted to Comhairle the information provider complained that the information on discrimination given by the Equality Authority had been vague and non-specific.

***Employment**

***Employment Rights**

***Labour Court**

Tipperary (Thurles CIC) 29/06/04

Staff at the Labour Inspectorate, following up on a complaint regarding working conditions, made by a client of Thurles CIC, informed the client that his employer was refusing to meet with the Inspector. The client was shocked to discover that there was little the Inspector could do to investigate the claim, if the client's employer was unwilling to cooperate. The employee was advised to take the case further to the Labour Court but when Thurles CIC contacted the Labour Court on the man's behalf, it was explained that his employer could also refuse to attend or even recognise the authority of the Labour Court if he so wished, rendering the Court powerless to investigate the clients claims.

"It seems there is an anomaly here in employment law, which mitigates against an employee's rights to seek redress against an employer. The employee has since dropped his case".

***Employment**

***Training**

Roscommon (Roscommon CIC) 08/04/04

A client in receipt of Deserted Wives' Benefit was interested in taking up a FAS training course. FAS notified the client stating that she would have to change her Deserted Wives payment to the One-Parent Family payment in

order to qualify. The client decided to clarify this information with the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The Department insisted that this particular criterion for eligibility no longer applied. The woman relayed this information to FAS but to no avail. FAS insisted the client could not register for the course without changing her payment.

The information provider involved in the case telephoned the Deserted Wives Benefit section to query the matter and was assured that the requirement to transfer to the One-Parent Family Payment was abolished in 2001. The CIC worker passed this information on to the client and suggested the client return to FAS to request they contact the section and come to an agreement.

“If what the Department says is correct, why is FAS still giving out incorrect information three years on?”

Roscommon CIC 24/06/04

A client of Roscommon CIC was in receipt of a Disability Benefit payment and had completed a number of Community Employment Schemes while on this payment. The client was interested in participating in another CE scheme, involving part-time work for a charitable organisation. However, the client was informed that she had exhausted her entitlement to take part in Community Employment Schemes. The information provider involved in this case contacted FAS for further information. They were told that if the client had been receiving Disability Allowance as opposed to Disability Benefit, there was every possibility she would be permitted to take part in another Scheme.

“It seems unfair that someone who was forced to give up work due to ill health, after 27 years of employment was being treated less favorably than someone who may never have worked. Surely if someone with a health problem is benefiting from working on Schemes of this nature, no differentiation should be made between those who have paid PRSI, and those who have not”.

***Employment**

***Community Employment Schemes**

Galway (Rosmuc CIC) 08/04/04

Budget changes for 2004 - Short Term Benefits.

A client of Rosmuc CIC approached the center with a query regarding unemployment benefit. The client had been participating in Community Employment Schemes for 3 years before applying for Unemployment Benefit. When his application was processed he was told he would qualify for a reduced payment of €105.60 rather than the €134.80 he had expected. When the client queried the figure, staff at his local Social Welfare office explained that the reduced payment was based on the client's average weekly earnings in 2002. The client's earnings in 2002 were €139.20 per week, which would have entitled the client to the maximum payment of €134.80 at that time but which falls short of the 2004 requirements.

“Back in 2002/2003 when clients asked information workers how much they would need to earn to ensure they were covered for full benefits we informed

them that €88.88 would be sufficient. Now we have to explain to them that earnings, which were more than sufficient in 2002, will only provide a reduced rate of Unemployment Benefit in 2004. I cannot understand how this decision could be legal. A decision like this cannot be introduced overnight; people directly affected should have been notified in advance. My client could not manage on €105.60 so he had to apply for the means tested payment”.

The information provider went on to note that a considerable number of participants currently on CE Schemes will complete the schemes in 2004 and will become eligible to apply for Unemployment Benefit. If these applicant's find they are unable to survive on €105.60 per week, as was the case for the information provider's client, they may also need to apply for Unemployment Assistance instead. However, the CIC worker was quick to realise that for a percentage of client's affected by the budgetary changes, the alternative of a means tested payment will not be open to them. For example in cases where clients are married to working spouses means tested UA payment will not be a viable option for them.

“This change will affect people for the next two years and I do not think it is fair to introduce such a decision especially when people had no control over what they earned in 2002”. The budgetary changes also affect those in receipt of Health and Safety Benefit and Disability Benefit.

***Social Welfare Assistance**

***Back to Work Enterprise Allowance**

***Access to Accurate Information**

Donegal (Carndonagh IIU) 01/04/04

Published qualifying criteria for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance states that an applicant must be in receipt of a qualifying payment from the DSFA. A client of Carndonagh IIU enquired about the Back to Work Scheme but had not been in receipt of an Unemployment payment for four months prior to his enquiry. The information provider checked his entitlement with the Department and discovered that he would qualify.

It appeared to the information staff at Carndonagh IIU that, contrary to their published information, the Department allows a claim where the applicant was in receipt of a qualifying payment in the 12-month period prior to making an application. This information is only available in guidelines issued to Department officials, who, acting under instruction, will not circulate copies outside the DSFA. The information provider involved stated, *“Documents on the CIDB are merely an electronic version of these booklets and, as such, are of no practical use to information officers when advising a client of their entitlements. This Centre has encountered the same difficulties with regard to Back to Education Allowance. Why is vital information such as this not available in the public domain and why must information officers continue to be obstructed from accessing information in this way?”*

- *Social Welfare Assistance**
- *Disability Allowance**
- *Rehabilitative Training**

06/05/04 Leitrim (Carrick-on-Shannon)

A female client in her mid-twenties in receipt of Disability Allowance contacted the Carrick-on-Shannon service on the advice of a caller to her home carrying out a survey. The client was not aware of any entitlement to pursue Rehabilitative Employment or Training.

“With the disbanding of the NRB it appears mainstream agencies are failing in their efforts to proactively promote employment and training options for people in receipt of Disability payments. The small number of people with disabilities in mainstream employment bares witness to this”

- *Social Welfare Insurance**
- *Maternity Benefit**

Roscommon (Roscommon CIC) 15/06/04

Men do not qualify for Maternity Benefit. In the event that a woman dies in childbirth or as a result of complications after birth, or if a mother abandons her baby, no statutory provision exists for the father of the child to take immediate leave from work. The only option available to the father in this situation is to apply for Parental Leave or Carer's Leave, both of which require a six-week notification period.

The information provider researching this issue commented that while Parental Leave is unpaid, in the case of a gay couple adopting a child, it is likely they would qualify for Adoptive Benefit. This could mean that a heterosexual man left to raise his child alone would be treated differently to a gay man adopting a child, in the eyes of the law and social welfare. Another anomaly faced by single fathers relates to holiday entitlements. While the holiday entitlement of a new mother remains unchanged by her Maternity Leave, a new father taking Carer's Leave is only protected for the first 13 weeks of leave, after which point his holiday entitlements would be affected.

“Perhaps the Department of Social and Family Affairs should consider awarding Maternity Benefit to new fathers with sole responsibility for their baby”.

- *Social Welfare General**
- *Fuel Allowance**

03/06/04 CIPS

A man on Disability Allowance contacted the Citizen's Information Phone Service in relation to entitlement to the Fuel Allowance. The client was living with his twenty four year old daughter who was in receipt of a One Parent Family Payment. Both individuals applied for the Fuel Allowance and each passed the means test but payment of the allowance was not made to either because the Department claimed:

- The client was living with someone who they believed was not dependent on him for financial support.
- His daughter was refused on the grounds that she was co-habiting!

The information provider encouraged the client to contact the Department to seek clarification on these matters as the literature available to CIPS on this subject states that where two or more people who would qualify for Fuel Allowance in their own right are living in the same household, the allowance would be paid to one qualified person in that household.

***Housing**

***Homelessness**

Dublin (SICCDA – Liberties CIC) 30/04/04

A homeless man visited SICCDA in April. He had been staying in a hostel but found it very unpleasant. The man explained that he was frightened of the other people staying in the hostel and by the level of drug abuse apparent. The client was so upset by the experience that he favoured returning to the streets over spending another night in the hostel. When the man presented at the Homeless Unit to collect his SWA payment he was informed that this money was paid on the condition that he remain in the hostel. Unless he returned to the hostel, he was told; he would not receive another payment. The information provider dealing with his case phoned the Homeless Unit who confirmed this. They would not make another payment until he could produce verifiable proof of residence in a hostel.

“We believe it is unacceptable that a man should feel he has no alternative but to live on the streets because the quality of accommodation provided by the state is so poor and the living arrangements so dangerous. The appalling nature of the situation is, in turn, exacerbated by Supplementary Welfare guidelines, which make provision to refuse payment to those most in need”

Limerick (Limerick CIC) 29/06/04

An elderly lady (81 years) approached Limerick CIC. She had been renting a flat in the area, but had to give up the flat when an accident made it necessary for her to enter a nursing home for seven weeks. She could not afford to keep up payment on the flat. Upon her discharge from the home, the client booked herself into a B&B but had been unsuccessful in sourcing alternative permanent accommodation. When she approached the CIC she was finding it increasingly difficult to pay the B&B rates.

The client had approached her local Health Board prior to this and was told by staff there that they would be willing to help her out with Rent Allowance just as long as she agreed not to live alone. She also visited the local Homeless Clinic but she alleged that, they were not prepared to help her and advised her to contact a local hostel for elderly women. The client was particularly distraught at this suggestion, as it would entail sharing accommodation with

strangers. The woman complained that staff at the Homeless Clinic were less than courteous to her and dismissed her concerns out of hand.

“She was very upset at being treated so discourteously at her age and felt she was given no support in finding suitable, alternative accommodation”.

***Housing**

***Rent Supplement**

10/05/04 Mayo (Ballina CIC)

A lone parent working as a home help was claiming the One Parent Family Payment. She had been in receipt of Rent Supplement but the Western Health Board reversed her entitlement abruptly. When the client enquired as to why her Rent Supplement had stopped a staff member explained that the Home Help Income Disregard was under review. This decision was never issued in writing to the client. The information provider at Ballina CIC followed up with a phone call to the main SWA Section in Dublin. Staff there explained that indeed the Home Help Income Disregard was under review but that for the time being the Disregard still applied. The client's Rent Supplement was subsequently reinstated.

“Health Boards should not withdraw a benefit just because an aspect of it is under review. Claims should be subject to existing law and official guidelines only. Also, claimants' should be notified, in writing, about decisions regarding benefits, this is particularly crucial in relation to adverse decisions, and should include a full explanation for the reversal of entitlement”.

***Housing**

***Social Housing**

***Local Authority Waiting Lists**

27/05/04 Roscommon (Roscommon CIC)

A Traveller couple with eight young children was on the Local Authority housing list for two years without any indication of when they might be given permanent accommodation. The couple alleged that their mobile home, provided by the local authority, was infested with rats and mice, as well as being damp, prone to flooding, unheated, and without sanitation or running water. When contacted, a staff member at the housing office explained that the couple had applied "just as 500-plus other people had" and that they would simply have to be patient.

The Environmental Health Office's remit extends to inspections, assessments and prioritisation of applications referred from local authorities in respect of persons seeking re-housing. However, as a rule the EHO does not generally accept self-referrals from members of the public, including local authority tenants, who believe their housing may be unfit for human habitation.

“It seems anomalous that the agency in a position to refer accommodation for inspection is the local authority, to which this couple has applied for housing, and that those who feel their housing is unfit are discouraged from seeking an inspection themselves without a referral from the local authority. It could perhaps be inferred that the local authority may have a vested interest in

failing to refer such accommodation for inspection by Environmental Health Officers”.

[It should be noted that while health boards are governed by broadly similar policy guidelines on environmental health issues, variations exist with respect to the degree to which Environmental Health Officers are encouraged to respond to self-referral cases made by local authority housing applicants. Depending on the severity and merits of the case, an Environmental Health Officer may act on a self-referral from a member of the public]

***Health**

***Mental Health**

17/05/04 Donegal (Donegal Town IIU)

A lady aged 35 was admitted to Letterkenny Hospital suffering from depression. The woman had 3 children aged 12, 7 and 5. The five-year-old child was autistic. During her treatment, which lasted 6 weeks, her two sisters cared for the children. The client's husband left her when her youngest child was born and she had not heard from him since then. The woman was in receipt of the One Parent Family Payment at €100 per week. Her father died in 2003 and had left her some land. The woman was renting this land out as an extra source of income. This in turn led to the reduced One Parent Family Payment. She intended to hold on to the land as a future investment for her sons.

The doctors in charge of her care refused to release her from hospital until such a time as full care could be arranged in the home. The woman was unable to afford such a level of care. The information provider alleged that the doctors involved in her case wished to detain the woman further in light of this, while putting the children into foster care. The CIC worker contacted the NWHB on the woman's behalf. The land, which the woman inherited from her father, counted as means, rendering her ineligible for their assistance. *“This lady is worrying excessively about her children's well being. She misses them greatly. This situation is detrimental to her health”.*

The information provider informed the woman's sister that she should seek out a neighbour or friend to apply for Carers Allowance to help with this problem and to facilitate getting the woman out of hospital. The information provider was disappointed that none of the voluntary agencies they contacted were in a position to provide support regarding her care. The CIC worker also alleged that Health Board staff appeared indifferent to the human face of this clerical problem. *“Staff there seemed determined to split this family up for whatever period of time it would take for them to release the children's mother. The cost of institutionalizing this lady, her autistic son and fostering the other two children is not being taken into consideration against the cost of home help for her”*

08/06/04 Longford (Longford CIC)

A client whose 23-year-old son has ongoing mental health problems contacted Longford CIC. The client's son was hospitalized in a psychiatric

unit three years previously; he had applied for Disability Allowance and is now living at home with his parents and younger brother. The client complained that the young man's disability was having a negative effect on all the family. His behavior was frequently difficult and threatening exacerbated at times by his heavy drinking. His father had suffered a stroke and believed he was in danger of having another one as a direct result of the upset the young man was causing. The family attempted to locate sheltered accommodation for their son and felt that if they were unsuccessful they would have no choice but to resort to barring him from the household, having already had occasion to call the Gardai to their home more than once.

The young man's parents believed that psychiatric follow-up services and associated support systems were hugely lacking for people like their son with regard to the monitoring of out patients' ongoing mental health conditions and the impact their condition has on the well being of the family as a whole. The clients were also distraught at the limited availability of sheltered accommodation with psychiatric supervision for mental health patients wishing to live independent lives. The information provider involved in this case noted that his parents were certain their troubled son would end up on the streets. Without sufficient support services or suitable housing options they felt powerless to stop this.

***Immigration**

***Residency Rights**

***Social Welfare Entitlement**

01/04/04 Roscommon (Roscommon CIC)

An information provider dealt with a number of telephone queries from clients working in the UK who intended to return to Ireland. All four clients contacted Roscommon CIC to clarify their entitlement under the Irish Social Welfare system, and then expressed their disappointment that there was so little support available to them.

Two of the CIC's clients used particularly strong language to express their dissatisfaction. They felt particularly aggrieved, having supported family members at home during their time working in the UK, that they as Irish citizens, would not be treated as 'well' as non-nationals.

"There appears to be some confusion amongst members of the Irish expatriate community, in particular, surrounding the direct provision system for asylum-seekers, and the rights of refugees under Irish law. It seems that the perception is quite common that non-nationals are 'fleecing' the State".

***Supplementary Welfare Allowance**

***Community Welfare Officers**

South County Dublin (Crumlin CIC) 19/05/04

A young woman, whose claim for Unemployment Benefit was being processed, approached Crumlin CIC. While awaiting payment she was without an income of any sort and was relying on support from friends in order

to make ends meet. Information providers in Crumlin referred the young woman to a Community Welfare Officer for an interim payment but her application was not considered.

The Superintendent CWO informed information providers of Crumlin CIC that for some years there has been a 'stand-off' on this issue. A long-running dispute exists among certain CWOs (supported by their union) concerning workload. As a result they refused to process applications for interim payments where an unemployment payment was involved. The SCWO was faced with the prospect of a union-backed trade dispute if he instructed a CWO to make any payments.

It is our experience that interim payments are vital to people while awaiting assessment for longer-term entitlements. Lack of support results in real hardship in many cases, as with our client. Whatever the reason for the dispute the fact that a Health Board service is being withheld from people is unjust.

New Issues Emerging This Quarter

***Social Welfare Assistance**

***Self-Employed**

Longford (Longford CIC) 29/04/04

A self-employed person awaiting surgery was not entitled to claim Disability Allowance, as his illness was not expected to last twelve months. The client had no entitlement to Disability Benefit as a self-employed individual, leaving him with no financial assistance for the duration of his illness.

30/04/04 Carlow (Carlow CIC)

A client who had been self-employed for 3 years applied for Unemployment Assistance but was deemed ineligible. The client alleged the staff at the Social Welfare office did not advise him of his right to visit his local Community Welfare Officer. He would have benefited from this information, as he was financially destitute at this time.

***Utilities**

***Refuse Charge Waiver**

13/05/04 CIPS

An elderly lady aged 80 years living in a rural area made a query. The client queried the availability of a refuse charge waiver for a person in her circumstances. Cork County Council refused to provide the client with a waiver on the grounds that a private company collected her refuse. The client was advised by the information provider involved in the case to seek assistance from her local CWO but the CWO declined, stating that they were not in a position to help. There is no system in place in either the County Councils or the Local Health Boards to subsidize refuse fees charged by private companies.

Galway (Galway CIC Outreach Portumna) 18/05/04

A client, wishing to find out if she could qualify for a waiver on refuse charges, approached Portumna outreach. The woman was a 63-year-old widow, who owned her own home. However the information provider dealing with her query discovered that as she paid privately for refuse collection she was ineligible to apply for the waiver scheme. The outreach worker felt that the lack of provision for those on small incomes paying privately for refuse collection amounted to discrimination based on arbitrary circumstances. The information provider suggested the client seek an Exceptional Needs Payment from her local Community Welfare Officer but the woman was subsequently refused.

***Social Welfare Insurance
*Application Difficulties**

Limerick (Limerick CIC) 27/04/04

A man, aged 55, approached Limerick Citizens Information Centre requesting advice regarding a letter sent to him by Social Welfare. The letter stated that on his next visit to the local office the man would need to produce written proof that he had been actively seeking employment. The letter also stated that if the man was unable to produce ample proof he would not be permitted to continue to sign for credits.

The client had left the Army in 1997 on a redundancy package. He had been unable to work for 10 months prior to accepting redundancy, as a result of a back injury but was unaware that he could claim Disability Benefit at the time. Once he had accepted the redundancy package he began signing for credits. He subsequently broke his foot, which prevented him working as a carpenter, which had been his original occupation before joining the army.

The CIC worker dealing with this man's case explained that the client was reluctant to tell the Social Welfare office he could not work. He believed they would be unwilling to allow him to continue to sign for credits. The client had also missed out on the opportunity to claim Disability Benefit at this point. The information provider commented, "*If he had been aware of his right to apply for Disability Benefit, when he left the Army, this man would still be covered instead he is 'falling through the cracks in the system'*"

Atypical Case Studies This Quarter

***Social Welfare Inspectors
*Discourteous Treatment**

12/05/04 Donegal (Letterkenny IIU)

A young woman aged 18, in receipt of One Parent Family Payment telephoned Letterkenny IIU to find out whether Social Welfare Inspectors adhered to a specific code of practice in interview situations and what documentation they were entitled to request from the applicant.

The young woman claimed she was questioned about where and how her baby had been conceived, who the child's Godparents were and what her

own parents, who ran their own business, paid their staff. The information provider responding to the call commented, *“This type of questioning is both intimidating and irrelevant. The issue of her parents’ business and the salaries paid to their employees has no bearing on her payment. We gave the client a name to which she could forward a written complaint”*.

***Tax**

***PAYE**

27/05/04 Roscommon (Roscommon CIC)

A man in full-time employment was supporting his wife, who was in receipt of a Disability Benefit payment. The couple felt that he was taxed excessively. Staff of Roscommon CIC telephoned two separate regional PAYE lo-call offices and received conflicting information in relation to tax bands for married couples.

In one office, they claimed that a *minimum* of €19, 000 tax band has to be allocated to the spouse where a spouse has income. The second PAYE office claimed this was the case only where the spouse's income exceeded €5,000. *“It is not widely known that the married bands are €37,000 for one earner, and a maximum of €19,000 for the spouse”*.

***Housing**

***Private Rented Sector**

***Rent**

19/05/04 Leitrim (Drumshanbo CIC)

A young professional contacted Drumshanbo CIC in relation to A Fixed Term Tenancy Agreement. During the course of her visit she explained that, when she and three housemates accepted a Tenancy, the Estate Agency charged each of them a fee of €50 for which no receipt was issued. The four women, however, had responded independently to an advertisement for a property and had not engaged the services of the Estate Agent at any time.

“This highlights what appears to be a deliberate attempt to exploit the anxiety caused by the current deficit in private rented accommodation. This person was advised to report the matter to The Irish Auctioneers & Valuers Institute and The Institute of Professional Auctioneers & Valuers”.

***Housing**

***Private Rented Sector**

***Problematic Tenants / Anti-Social Behaviour**

Longford (Longford CIC) 01/06/04

A client sought advice from Longford CIC on how best to deal with a problematic tenant in arrears with rent and ESB bills. The tenant was also responsible for causing numerous disturbances to his neighbours. The landlord alleged that his tenant was attempting to intimidate him, and that he had given his tenant every opportunity, over the preceding number of months, to repay his debts. The client's tenant explained to the information provider, in the presence of the landlord, that he had lived on the streets in the past and

would possibly end up sleeping rough on the street yet again if the landlord terminated his tenancy. The information provider alleges that the tenant threatened the landlord about the consequences of any such action and stated that he would sue him if he were not given a month's notice and a reason for the termination.

Longford CIC contacted Threshold on behalf of both the landlord and his tenant. After which, the tenant agreed to pay the landlord €200 that evening and a further €200 within a few days. The landlord insisted that this did not happen. His tenant went missing and left his belongings in the flat. In response to this, the Landlord hand delivered a week's notice to the tenant's flat but insists he heard nothing further from the tenant. The information provider contacted Threshold again when the landlord, approached the CIC for a second time 10 days later (11 June 2004). Threshold advised the client that he was taking a risk in offering only one week's notice and that under the terms of a tenancy agreement the landlord should offer a month's notice. He should not enter the flat, change the locks or remove the tenant's belongings. Threshold advised the client that he await his tenant's return over the next month.

The information provider argued that this incident was causing the client a lot of stress and anxiety and felt that there was a shortage of organisations to support landlords with problematic tenants. The client reflected that he had a tenant who had gone missing, he did not know if he would ever get the money owed to him for rent and ESB (€800 to date). In addition, he had to wait another month before he could vacate the flat and seek another tenant. *"This landlord felt that existing support organisations are weighted in favour of the tenant, he also felt there should be a government agency to support landlords who find themselves in similar circumstances"*.

***Social Welfare General**

***Household Benefits Package**

28/04/04 Donegal (Dungloe IIU)

Dungloe IIU had a query from a man from Scotland who visited Donegal for 6 weeks every summer. The man brings a portable television with him every year when he comes to stay. He was informed that he would have to purchase a television license for the portable TV despite only using it for 6 weeks out of the year. As the client was over 70 years of age he wished to know if he would be eligible to receive the Household Benefits Package. He was aware that people over 70 years of age in this country receive the Household Benefit Package regardless of their means.

Staff at Dungloe IIU informed the client that he would be required to reside permanently in Donegal in order to be eligible for the allowance. The information provider felt that special allowances should be made for people in similar situations to his. They argued for the introduction of a license, which could be bought at a lower rate, or the provision of a license, which would remain valid for a number of years at a time.

***Social Welfare Assistance**

***Motorised Transport Grant**

Tipperary (Thurles CIC)

The qualifying conditions for the Motorised Transport Grant stipulate that an applicant must have a severe disability and that a car is essential to obtaining or retaining employment. Thurles CIC had a client with Multiple Sclerosis who did not satisfy the condition of employment, as her physical disability was too severe to permit her to work. However the client required transport as she lived in a very isolated area inadequately serviced by public transport. The woman applied for the grant stating geographical isolation as grounds. Much to the amazement of Thurles CIC staff, the client was awarded the grant. The information provider involved in the case documented their surprise and confusion at the decision as it was the first time they were aware of the Motorised Transport Grant being awarded to an unemployed applicant not actively seeking work.

***Employment**

***Work Permits**

Roscommon (Roscommon CIC) 23/06/04

A client of Roscommon CIC ran a garage and sourced the majority of his income from repairing and servicing tractors. Many of his customers' tractors were quite old. The client found it very difficult to recruit suitably qualified Irish mechanics and so turned to foreign nationals with the relevant credentials. This man was always satisfied with each of the non-nationals expertise in dealing with older models of tractor, calling them "*excellent and competent*"

However, the client began to find it increasingly difficult to obtain employment permits or renewals for his mechanics, and was informed that this difficulty arose directly from a restriction on immigration policy for mechanics introduced by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The client pointed out that the term 'mechanic' is very broad in its definition, and while the country may have enough car mechanics, he simply could not find an Irish mechanic who had the knowledge and skills necessary to work on his customers' tractors.

It appears that the Department's definition of a mechanic may be too general, and may not take the labour requirements of employers in smaller sub-categories into account. Perhaps this should be raised with the Department, with a view to splitting the 'mechanics' category into 'agricultural', 'motor' and 'heavy plant', as suggested by our client.

Roscommon (Roscommon CIC)

A client of Roscommon CIC applied for a Work Permit in January 2004, enclosing a cheque for €500 with his application. The cheque was cashed soon after. The client's application was refused in April 2004. The letter of refusal did not include a reimbursement cheque.

In June of the same year, the client applied for a Work Permit for a different worker. Before doing so, he telephoned the relevant section of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and asked if they could

transfer the application fee from his first application to the latest one. The client alleged that the member of staff at the department insisted that this could not be done. The client asked when his money would be returned and he alleged that he was told this would happen '*in due course*'. He felt he was given no firm indication when the fee might be returned to him. The client suggested that if he sent the new application form without a fee, the official could simply move the fee from the earlier application to the newer one, but he alleged the staff member was adamant that if he sent an application without the correct fee, it would not be processed. The information provider involved in the case commented that this case raises two issues:

- *The first relates to the length of time taken to process the application. From the point of view of an employer, a four months waiting period was excessive, and deprived the employer of much needed labour for that period.*
- *The second issue concerns the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. If the department insists that all applications are accompanied by a fee, but are not returning fees to employers whose applications are refused, the process would appear unjust.*

Dublin (City Centre North West Information Service) 01/05/04

A man from Pakistan approached Dublin (NWIS) looking for advice and assistance in relation to an MBA course in a college in Cork. He had applied for a place on the course while still in Pakistan and had been accepted onto the course. After paying all the necessary fees the client applied for a Student Visa. When his Visa was issued and he had booked his flight to Ireland, he received a letter from the college stating that his course was no longer available but that he had been approved for an alternative course. This course offered a lower qualification than the client's first choice, however.

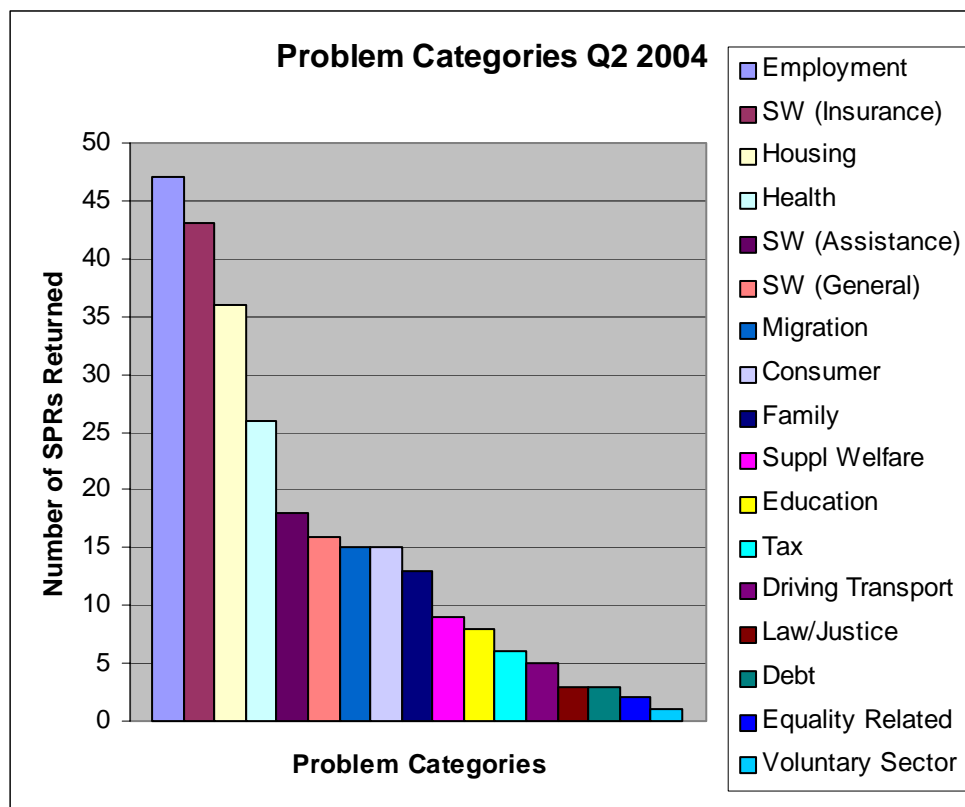
The letter also outlined the terms and conditions of accepting a course at the college. One of the terms stated that once a Student Visa had been issued, fees would not be refunded. Despite numerous attempts by the client, to negotiate a refund through the college representative in Pakistan, the institution would not reimburse his fees. As he had parted with over €5,000 at this point, and had given up his job in Pakistan, the client decided to travel to Ireland, hoping to resolve the problem from here and to perhaps find a more suitable course. On arrival in Ireland, he approached the college in person in an attempt to resolve the issue, again to no avail. The client alleged that the college warned him if he did not agree to take up the alternative course, he would be deported.

The man was successful in sourcing a more suitable course elsewhere however and paid for it in full. Paying for the second course depleted the client's savings substantially. He stepped up efforts to get a refund from the college and informed the Dept of Immigration of his change of college, as was the requirement under the conditions of his student visa. The client also informed the department that he felt the college had cheated him but he was told that it was a private matter between the student and the college.

While staying in Cork, the gentleman discovered that there were at least 25 other students who had come to Ireland to do the same MBA course who were subsequently forced to take up other courses also. The man then relocated to Dublin. Upon arriving in Dublin he discovered other students who came to Ireland and had experienced similar difficulties in a host of other colleges.

The information provider involved in this particular case commented on the unsatisfactory regulation of these colleges as a cause for concern. Fee paying foreign students provide a substantial income for Irish colleges. The CIC worker also noted that since the Department of Immigration issue Student Visas to students attending Irish colleges, the department should be in a position to impose stricter controls on colleges engaging in these and similar dubious practices. The possibility of losing the income provided by these applicants would act as a deterrent in this regard.

“There should be a body to investigate student complaints. This body could then refer their findings to Immigration; in turn no Student Visa would be issued to applicants’ from colleges found to be ‘problematic’”.



Number of SPRs Returned Q2 2004

CIC	No.
Carlow (Carlow CIC)	18
Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)	8
Clare (Shannon CIC)	2
Cork (Cork (South Mall) CIC)	3
Donegal (Carndonagh IIU)	4
Donegal (Donegal Town IIU)	4
Donegal (Dungloe IIU)	8
Donegal (Letterkenny IIU)	19
Donegal (Milford IIU)	5
Dublin City (SICCDA-Liberties CIC)	4
Dublin (City Centre North-West Information Service CIC)	3
Dublin (City Centre (Dublin) CIC)	5
Dublin (Dun Laoghaire CIC)	1
Dublin (Malahide CIC)	2
Dublin (Northside CIC)	5
Dublin (Swords CIC)	20
Galway (Clifden)	1
Galway (Galway CIC Outreach Portumna)	2
Galway (Galway CIC)	15
Galway (Rosmuc CIC)	3
Kerry (Killarney)	3
Kerry (Killorglin)	5
Kildare (Maynooth)	3
Kildare (Newbridge)	5
Kilkenny (Kilkenny CIC)	7
Laois (Portlaoise CIC)	2
Leitrim (Carrick-on-Shannon CIC)	9
Leitrim (Drumshanbo CIC)	8
Limerick (Kilmallock CIC)	3
Limerick (Limerick CIC)	8
Longford (Longford CIC)	13
Louth (Dundalk CIC)	1
Mayo (Ballina CIC)	2
Mayo (Castlebar CIC)	9
Offaly (Birr CIC)	1
Offaly (Edenderry CIC)	1
Offaly (Tullamore CIC)	6
Roscommon (Roscommon CIC)	28
Sligo (Sligo CIC)	5
South County Dublin (Clondalkin CIC)	1
South County Dublin (Crumlin CIC)	3
Tipperary (Thurles CIC)	4
Waterford (Waterford CIC)	1
Westmeath (Athlone CIC)	1
Wexford (Wexford CIC)	4
Wicklow (Baltinglass CIC)	1

Total 266
SPRs Returned by CIC's

