

SATURDAY 15 MAY 1993

# City suffers from 'bad press' on crime

By PATRICIA FEEHILY

THE image of Limerick as a crime ridden city

was condemned this week at the opening of a public service exhibition on entitlements for the over 55s.

Limerick has been the

victim of "bad press" in the area of crime, according to Deputy Mayor, Cllr Dick Sadlier.

"For a city of its size, it does not have the same

level of crime as other places", he told the opening of the exhibition in City Hall.

The exhibition was organised as part of Active Age week in association with the European Year of Older People and Solidarity Between Generations.

The organisations involved were the Mid Western Health Board, the Department of Social Welfare, Revenue Commissioners, Limerick City VEC, the Corporation, Garda Síochána and Telecom Eireann.

Cllr Sadlier also announced that a crime prevention week will be held in the city in the near future.

He described this week's exhibition as "a valuable and worthwhile exercise"

and praised the Revenue Commissioners who had initiated it.

"The fact that services are available doesn't always mean that they are availed of," he said. "People are often loath to come forward and can be overwhelmed by bureaucracy."

Bureaucracy, he told the attendance, should be seen as a means to an end.

Meanwhile, Minister for Social Welfare, Michael Woods, praised Limerick as one of the first places to recognise the importance of the computerised self-service, Viewpoint, which was launched at the Spring Show. The service is available in the Limerick Social Welfare office.

Dr Woods said that access to information was of "paramount importance".

"It is essential," he said, "that all citizens are aware of their entitlements, and have easy access to social information when they need it," he said.

The Minister said that 54 Social Welfare information offices throughout the country were now acquainting people with their rights



At the opening of the exhibition were, from left, Tony Quilty, Tom O'Sullivan, Eddie Dooly, Mary Boyce and Liam Wrenn, all from the Mid Western Health Board.

on a person to person basis.

Deputy Woods congratulated everyone concerned with the exhibition, describing it as "a new departure for public service information drives."

Outlining several new initiatives to improve services for the elderly and the retired and calling for an end to "ageism", the Minister said that his new Social Mentor scheme will make the skills and experiences of active, elderly retired people available to local communities and

groups of young unemployed people who are trying to get a foothold in the jobs market

The Government, he said, had allocated £100,000 to the scheme, and details will be announced shortly.

The Minister also announced details of the new summer jobs scheme for students who are to be deprived of the dole over the summer holidays.

The new scheme will operate from July 1 to September 30 and will

apply to full time students who cannot get summer jobs and who would formerly have been eligible for at least £15 a week unemployment assistance.

The students, who will have completed at least one year of college, and who will be subject to a means test, will be able to earn £40 per week working for voluntary organisations and community groups.

The Minister said that his Department will be advertising this week for applicants and sponsors.

"This new scheme," he said, "will give voluntary and community organisations, as well as public bodies, the opportunity to avail of the skills and talents of third level students during their summer holidays."

He pointed out, however, that mature students, who commenced a course after the age of 23, as well as those participating in the third level allowance scheme administered by the Department will continue to be eligible for unemployment assistance.



Minister for Social Welfare, Dr Woods, with Peg Morgan, Ballinacurra, a finalist in the Irish Life Pensioner of the Year competition, and Jim O'Connor, regional manager, social welfare, Limerick. (LL)