

Child is not for export

By Mary Ellen Breen

"I'M NOT exporting my child", was the stance taken by one frustrated father as he slammed the red tape around Government support initiatives aimed at assisting new businesses. VAT increase, high rates, an over reliance on exports and issues with the Social Welfare system were just some of the issues highlighted by frustrated business men and women at a meeting, behind closed doors, with Richard Bruton, Minister for Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation. In the city, yesterday (Monday), to discuss the Action Plan for Jobs he was left in no doubt about the level of anger over stumbling blocks confronting those trying to help themselves.

Colm Mullane spoke of his anger at the lack of help made available to his daughter, who has gone onto set up her own hair salon. Without her own drive, he said she would have joined many others in the dole queue.

"The jobs action plan you have,

we have heard it all before. We went through red tape issues over the past two years. The future is what is sitting beside me," he said, nodding to his daughter.

RED TAPE

"She went to organisations and got nothing but red tape. We couldn't get a leaflet, a bit of help or support off anyone and I think that's a disgrace. If we had waited and listened to all of these promises she would be on the live register by now. Instead she is currently employing four people.

AIB were the only one to recognise her business plan," he said. Mr. Mullane slammed the Government for their over-interest in export related business and the lack of support available for his daughter, who he said has not yet turned 20.

"I'm sick of listening to export talk. We exported all our money to foreign countries — now we are exporting our people. I am not exporting my child and I don't want my 11-year-old

exported either. If we were to wait for you to assist us we would be starving," he said.

Regina Mangan owner of Bookaroom.ie said the Government's decision to increase VAT has had a "detrimental" effect on business.

She said her company had not passed the increase on to customers and that, added to the current climate, is making business incredibly tough.

HARNESS

"The Government are talking about increasing the VAT in the next budget, really what you are going to do is put harnesses around small business. It's not a constructive thing to do."

She also took the opportunity to point out inadequacies in the Social Welfare system, slamming it as a "disgrace." She said she currently has a man on internship who feels unable to take up three weeks paid work when he completes the internship because he fears he will not be able to get back into the Social Welfare sys-

tem within a reasonable timeframe afterwards.

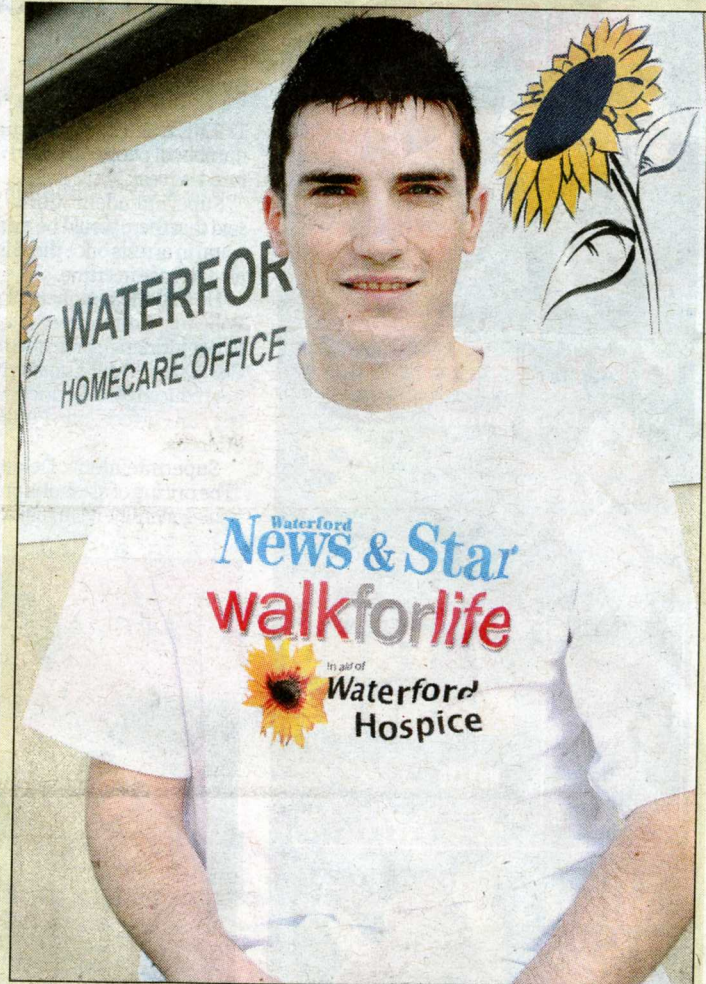
"The system won't allow him to go off Social Welfare to take paid work. It needs to move quickly. It's not flexible," she said.

MICRO FINANCE

Responding to the concerns Minister Bruton agreed that the Government would not be able to support every start up company. He said there would be a micro finance fund available for other small businesses in the future, that won't require the sort of collateral that banks typically will look at. In relation to the tax hike he commented, "Government have choices and they are always difficult choices when you have to raise a certain amount in tax. Do you go back and raise more from income tax or do you try to spread the load and we decided very clearly that we couldn't continue to tax income."

He said the Social Welfare system was experiencing a shake-up that would assist people in taking up job opportunities.

Craig Champions Hospice Cause



Pictured at the Waterford Hospice Homecare Office at WRH for the launch of the Waterford News & Star Walk for Life 2012 in aid of the Waterford Hospice was Craig Breen, World Rally Champion. Photo: Joe Evans