

SECTION ONE:

Department of Employment Affairs
and Social Protection



Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is a means-tested payment paid to people who provide full-time care to a person/child who needs support because of age, disability or illness (including mental illness).

If you qualify for Carer's Allowance you may also qualify for a **Household Benefits Package** (if you live with the person you are caring for) along with a Free Travel Pass and a Carer GP Visit Card.

If you think you have been wrongly refused Carer's Allowance, or you are unhappy about a decision of a social welfare Deciding Officer regarding your entitlements, you can appeal this decision through the Social Welfare Appeals Office.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

To be eligible for Carer's Allowance, you must:

- ✓ Provide full-time care and attention to a person in need of care who does not normally live in an institution. However, you may continue to be regarded as providing full-time care and attention if you or the person being cared for is undergoing medical or other treatment in a hospital or other institution for a period not longer than 13 weeks
- ✓ Be habitually resident in the State
- ✓ Be at least 18 years old and
- ✓ Not be engaged in employment, self-employment, training or education courses outside the home for more than 18.5 hours a week. During your absence, adequate care for the person requiring full-time care and attention must be arranged.

The person you are caring for must be:

- Over the age of 16 and so incapacitated as to require full-time care and attention or aged under 16 and getting a **Domiciliary Care Allowance**
- The person receiving care is regarded as requiring full-time care and attention where:

- they are so incapacitated as to require continuous supervision in order to avoid danger to him or herself, or continual supervision and frequent assistance throughout the day in connection with normal bodily functions
- they are so incapacitated as to be likely to require full-time care and attention for a period of at least 12 months
- Not live in a hospital, convalescent home or other similar institution.



HOW MEANS ARE ASSESSED:

The means test for Carer's Allowance involves assessing your income (excluding your home). If you are single, €332.50 of your gross weekly income is not taken into account (or disregarded). If you are married, in a civil partnership or cohabiting, the first €665 of your combined gross weekly income is disregarded. PRSI, union dues, superannuation (pension contributions) and standard travel expenses are also deducted. For a couple, their combined gross weekly income (less any disregards) is then halved to give the carer's weekly means.

If you are getting a social welfare payment from another state, an amount up to the maximum rate of the Irish State Pension (Contributory) is exempt from the means test. Any foreign social welfare payment above the maximum Irish State Pension (Contributory) rate is treated as income for the means test.

If you are getting maintenance payments, these are assessed (along with any other source of income) and the first €332.50 (or €665 for a couple) is disregarded.

What counts as means?

Your means includes any income that you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant have, or property (except your home) or an asset that could bring in money or provide you with an income, for example, an occupational pension or benefits from another country. Any payment made by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) is not taken into account in the means test for Carer's Allowance.

Investments and savings

The actual income from investments and money in a savings account is not taken as your means. Instead, investment items such as money in a savings account, cash-in-hand or money in a current account and the cash value of investments and property are added together and a special formula called the 'Capital Formula' is used to work out your weekly means. Find out more about how capital is assessed in the means test for Carer's Allowance.

Half-Rate Carer's Allowance

If you are getting certain social welfare payments and you are providing full-time care and attention to another person, you can keep your main social welfare payment and get half-rate Carer's Allowance as well. If you were getting another social welfare payment before claiming Carer's Allowance, you may get your original payment reinstated and also get half-rate Carer's Allowance.

If you are getting Carer's Allowance and subsequently become entitled to another payment, you can claim the other payment and get half your rate of Carer's Allowance but only if the other payment is a qualifying payment for half-rate Carer's Allowance.

For example, if you are getting Carer's Allowance and working, you can build up an entitlement to a contributory payment. This means, if you are out of work sick you may be entitled to Illness Benefit. In this case, you may get full-rate Illness Benefit and half-rate Carer's Allowance - although this will depend on your PRSI contributions, level of earnings and current means.

If you are being claimed for as a qualified adult on your spouse's, civil partner's or cohabitant's social welfare payment and you are providing full-time care to another person, you may apply for half-rate Carer's Allowance and retain your current increase for a qualified adult in full.

If you are parenting alone and you are providing full-time care and attention to your child or another person, you can claim **One-Parent Family Payment** and half-rate Carer's Allowance until your youngest child turns 16, provided you continue to meet the conditions for both schemes.

More information is available in our document on **half-rate Carer's Allowance**.

Caring for more than one person

If you are providing care to more than one person, you may be entitled to an additional 50% of the maximum rate of Carer's Allowance each week.

Care Sharing

Two carers who are providing care on a part-time basis in an established pattern can also share a single Carer's Allowance payment and the annual Carer's Support Grant of €1,700. Each carer must be providing care from Monday to Sunday but can do so on alternate weeks. A carer providing full-time care on a part-time basis is required under legislation to provide this care for a complete week (Monday to Sunday).

A carer who is providing care on a part-time basis to someone who attends a residential institution, for example, every other week, can also be accommodated on the Carer's Allowance scheme.

You must meet all the usual qualifying conditions for Carer's Allowance.

Carer's Support Grant

Tax implications

Carer's Allowance is a taxable source of income and should be advised to your local tax office.

Credits

You may get credited social insurance contributions (Credits) while you are getting Carer's Allowance. However if there is a gap of more than two years between a person's last paid PRSI contribution and their receipt of Carer's Allowance, they may not receive a Credit.

Change of circumstances

Carer's Allowance continues to be paid for 12 weeks after the death of the person being cared for.

If the person being cared for moves permanently into a residential care or nursing home, the Carer's Allowance continues to be paid for a period of 12 weeks.

APPLICATION PROCESS:



You should apply for Carer's Allowance as soon as possible. To apply, fill in an application form for **Carer's Allowance (CR1)**, which is available from your local Family Carers Ireland Support Centre. The form includes a medical report which must be signed by the person you are caring for and by their doctor. A checklist is also included in the form which you should use to review your application before sending it in.

The application form (CR1)

The application form for Carer's Allowance asks for a lot of detailed information from you. This is because:

- The DEASP has to work out your household income
- The Department must be satisfied that you, the carer, are providing full-time care and attention and are able to do so
- The Department must also examine the medical condition of the person being cared for to decide if they need full-time care and attention

You can get help with filling in the form from your local Family Carers Ireland Support Centre

Applying to care for more than 1 person

If you are applying for Carer's Allowance for more than one person in your care, you should fully complete the application form for one of the people being cared for and you only need to complete Parts 1, 2 and 10 of the application form (CR2) for the second person.

If you are already getting Carer's Allowance for one person and are applying for another, you must complete the application form (CR2) in full for the second person.

If you are caring for more than two people, you are not entitled to claim Carer's Allowance for them.

Carer's Allowance and Domiciliary Care Allowance

You cannot get Carer's Allowance for a child under 16 years of age - unless **Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA)** is being paid on behalf of that child. When you apply for Carer's Allowance for a child getting DCA, you do not need to get the medical report (Part 10, Section 3) completed by their doctor.

Carer's Allowance may be reviewed at any time to make sure that you continue to be entitled to the payment. When initiating a review, the DEASP will contact you and ask you to get a medical report completed by the child's doctor and provide recent evidence to show that the child continues to require full-time care and attention.

If the DEASP find that your child meets the full-time care and attention criteria, you will continue to get your Carer's Allowance payment. If your child no longer meets the full-time care and attention criteria, your claim will be closed. You can submit more evidence or appeal this decision in the usual way.

Appeals

If you are unhappy with a decision about your application, you can make an appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. You should appeal within 21 days of the date on the letter you receive notifying you of the decision.

Your local Family Carers Ireland Carer Support Manager can help you in making an appeal. [Click here to find your nearest Centre.](#)

After you apply

There may be a delay in processing your Carer's Allowance claim as it may take some time for your application to be processed. You may qualify for **Supplementary Welfare Allowance** while you are waiting for your claim to be processed.

Payment will be awarded from the date your application is received or from the date the qualifying payment is awarded, if later. Forward the completed application form with the relevant certificates to Carer's Allowance Section at the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection - see address below.

Carer's Allowance Section

Social Welfare Services Office,
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection,

Government Buildings, Ballinalee Road, Longford,
Ireland

Tel: (043) 334 0000

LoCall: 1890 92 77 70

(Note: the rates charged for using 1890 [LoCall] numbers may vary)

Carer's Support Grant

The Carer's Support Grant is a non-means tested annual payment of €1,700 made to carers by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). The scheme name was changed from the Respite Care Grant in 2016 to better reflect how the grant is used. Carers can use the grant in whatever way they wish including to pay for respite.

In June of each year (the first Thursday), the DEASP pays the grant automatically to carers getting **Carer's Allowance**, **Carer's Benefit** or **Domiciliary Care Allowance** from the department. Only one Carer's Support Grant can be paid for each person getting care.

For carers who do not automatically receive the Carer's Support Grant, the grant is paid later in the year, usually September to November.

Note: The Carer's Support Grant is NOT a taxable source of income.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

The grant is NOT means-tested. It is paid automatically to people getting Carer's Allowance (whether full-rate or half-rate), Carer's Benefit or Domiciliary Care Allowance. It can also be paid to certain other carers.

To qualify, you must be:

- ✓ Aged 16 or over
- ✓ Ordinarily resident in the State
- ✓ Living with the person being cared for or, if not, be contactable quickly by a direct system of communication (for example, telephone or alarm)
- ✓ Caring for the person on a full-time basis

- ✓ Caring for the person for at least 6 months - this period must include the first Thursday in June.

During this 6 month caring period, you cannot:

- Work more than 18.5 hours per week outside the home (increased from 15 hours to 18.5 hours in January 2020)
- Take part in an education or training course for more than 18.5 hours a week (increased from 15 hours to 18.5 hours in January 2020)
- Get **Jobseeker's Allowance** or **Jobseeker's Benefit**
- Sign on for **credited contributions** or
- Live in a hospital, convalescent home or similar institution.

If you are caring for more than one person, a grant is paid for each of them.



APPLICATION PROCESS:

If you are getting Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit or Domiciliary Care Allowance, you do not need to apply for the Carer's Support Grant. It will be automatically paid to you in June.

If you are not getting one of the above payments, you should fill in an application form **CSG 1** in respect of each person you are caring for.

If you were not getting one of the above payments, but got the Carer's Support Grant last year, you do not need to re-apply this year. The department will send you a letter and a short 2-page questionnaire in April. You must return the completed questionnaire as it will be used to assess you for the Carer's Support Grant this year.

You can apply for a Carer's Support Grant for any given year from April of that year until 31 December of the following year.

For example:

You can apply for a grant for 2019 at any time from April 2019 up until 31 December 2020. However, you must not have been working or taking part in an education or training course for more than 18.5 hours per week in 2019. You can apply for a grant for 2020 at any time from April 2020 up until 31 December 2021. From January 2020, you can work or take part in an education or training course for up to 18.5 hours per week.

You can download a **Carer's Support Grant application form** or get one from your local **Family Carers Ireland Support Centre** and post your form to:

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Carer's Support Grant Section
PO Box 10085
Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 673 2222

Carer's Benefit

Carer's Benefit is a payment made to insured people who leave the workforce to care for a person(s) in need of full-time care and attention.

You can get Carer's Benefit for a total period of 104 weeks for each person being cared for. This may be claimed as a single, continuous period or in any number of separate periods up to a total of 104 weeks. However, if you claim Carer's Benefit for less than six consecutive weeks in any given period, you must wait for a further six weeks before you can claim Carer's Benefit to care for the same person again.

If you are caring for more than one person, you may receive payment for each care recipient for 104 weeks. This may result in the care periods overlapping or running concurrently. If you get Carer's Benefit, you are eligible for a GP Visit Card.

Carer's Leave

Your right to Carer's Leave from employment complements the Carer's Benefit Scheme. Carer's Leave allows you to leave your employment temporarily for up to 104 weeks to provide full-time care for people in need of full-time care and attention. The leave is unpaid but people who take Carer's Leave have their jobs kept open for the duration of the leave. You do not have to be eligible for Carer's Benefit to get Carer's Leave.

If you think you have been wrongly refused Carer's Benefit, or you are unhappy about a decision of a social welfare deciding officer about your entitlements, you can appeal this decision through the Social Welfare Appeals office.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

You may be eligible for Carer's Benefit if:

- ✓ You are aged 16 or over and under 66
- ✓ You have been employed for at least 8 weeks, whether consecutive or not, in the previous 26 week period. You must be in employment for a minimum of 16 hours per week or 32 hours per fortnight. You don't have to meet this condition if you were getting Carer's Benefit in the previous 26 weeks
- ✓ You give up work in order to be a full-time carer. Being a full-time carer means you must provide full-time care and attention to a person in need of care who is not living in an institution
- ✓ You are not living in a hospital, convalescent home or other similar institution. However, you may continue to be regarded as providing full-time care and attention, if you or the person being cared for is having medical or other treatment in a hospital or other institution for a period not longer than 13 weeks
- ✓ You meet the PRSI contribution conditions
- ✓ The person being cared for is so incapacitated as to require full-time care and attention and is not normally living in an institution. Medical certification is required unless the person being cared for is a child who is

getting **Domiciliary Care Allowance**. The carer of a child on a Domiciliary Care Allowance does not need to be the person who receives that allowance on the child's behalf

- ✓ You must not take part in employment, self-employment, training or education courses outside the home for more than 18.5 hours a week whilst claiming Carer's Benefit. The maximum amount you can earn is *€332.50 per week.

*€332.50 is your net income after you have deducted income tax and Universal Social Charge, PRSI, superannuation (pension payments), pension levy, union dues, subscriptions to Friendly Societies and any health insurance contract premium from your total wage.

PRSI contribution conditions

You must have at least 156 contributions paid at any time between your entry into insurance and the time you make your claim for Carer's Benefit and you must have:

- ✓ 39 contributions paid in the relevant tax year or
- ✓ 39 contributions paid in the 12-month period before the start of Carer's Benefit or
- ✓ 26 contributions paid in the relevant tax year and 26 contributions paid in the year before that.

The relevant tax year is the second last complete tax year before the year in which you make your claim. So, for claims made in 2020, the relevant tax year is 2018.

Only contributions at Class A, B, C, D, H and E are counted towards Carer's Benefit. Class S (self-employed contributions) do not count.

Periods of insurance in another EU member states may be taken into account to meet the PRSI contribution conditions. The last week of insurance must be paid in Ireland.

You are awarded credited contributions or credits automatically when you are getting Carer's Benefit. Credits are awarded at the same rate as your last paid contribution. These credits help protect your future entitlement to social welfare benefits and pensions.

Claiming an increase for a child dependant

You can claim an **increase for a child** if they are under age 18, normally live with you and are maintained by you. If a child is in full-time education by day at a recognised school or college, this increase is payable until the end of the academic year in which the child reaches age 22. (This child does not have to live at home).

A full-rate Increase for a Qualified Child (IQC) is payable if you are single, widowed, separated or a civil partner who is not living with the other civil partner. You may get a half-rate IQC if you are living with your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant.

If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant is getting a payment from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, you will each get a half-rate increase. You cannot claim a half-rate IQC with your Carer's Benefit if your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant has an income of over €400 a week.

Tax implications

Carer's Benefit is a taxable source of income and should be advised to your local tax office.

Continuing the payment after a death

If the person you are caring for dies, payment of Carer's Benefit will continue for 6 weeks following the death.

You are not entitled to the Household Benefits package and Free Travel under the Carer's Benefit Scheme.



APPLICATION PROCESS:

To apply, fill in an application form for Carer's Benefit. This form (CARB1) is also available from your local Family Carers Ireland Support Centre or from the Carer's Benefit Section (see 'Where to apply' below). The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) recommends that you apply for Carer's Benefit 10 weeks before you leave employment.

Parts 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 should be completed by you. Part 4 should be completed, signed and stamped by your employer. Part 10 should be completed by the person(s) receiving care from you and his/her doctor should complete, sign and stamp the Medical Report.

If you are applying for Carer's Benefit for a second person you should use the application form CARB2.

Carers have important legal rights. If you think your rights as a carer have been breached, you can make a complaint under the Carer's Leave Act 2001, using the online complaint form (available by selecting 'make a complaint in relation to employment rights' on the Workplace Relations Commission website. For more information on Carer's Benefit, contact your local Family Carers Ireland Support Centre or:

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Carer's Benefit Section
Social Welfare Services Office Government Buildings
Ballinalee Road
Longford
Ireland

Tel: (043) 334 0000

LoCall: 1890 92 77 70

(Note: the rates charged for using 1890 [LoCall] numbers may vary)

For more information on Carer's Leave, contact:

Workplace Relations Commission - Information and Customer Service

O'Brien Road
Carlow
R93 E920

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1pm; 2pm to 5pm

Tel: (059) 917 8990

Domiciliary Care Allowance

Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) is a monthly payment of €309.50 for a child aged under 16 with a severe disability who requires ongoing care and attention, substantially over and above the care and attention usually required by a child of the same age. It is not means tested.

You can find the definitions for terms such as severe or substantially in the DCA Medical Guidelines. These are used by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) when it is assessing applications for DCA. The guidelines state that the payment is not based on the type of disability but on the resulting physical or mental impairment which means that the child

requires substantially more care and attention than another child of the same age.

You can also read the information leaflet for **DCA (SW127)**. The leaflet is available from your **Family Carers Ireland Support Centre**.

DCA Medical Card scheme

Since 1 June 2017, all children getting DCA are eligible for a Medical Card without a means test.

If the child does not already have a Medical Card or GP Visit Card, you can register them online or download a registration form. If the child already has a Medical Card or GP Visit Card, they will be automatically registered for a Medical Card and registration is not required.

The HSE has a list of **Frequently Asked Questions** about this scheme.



ELIGIBILITY:

To qualify, the child must have a severe disability that is likely to last for at least one year and:

- ✓ Be aged under 16 (at 16, the child can apply for a Disability Allowance - see 'How to apply' below for more information)
- ✓ Live at home with the person claiming the allowance for 5 or more days a week. However, there are some exceptions to this – see 'Living at home' below
- ✓ Meet the medical criteria - see below
- ✓ Be ordinarily resident in the State.

In addition, the person claiming the allowance for the child must:

- ✓ Provide for the care of the child
- ✓ Be habitually resident in the State

Medical criteria

The legislation states that to qualify for DCA, a child must have “a severe disability requiring continual or continuous care and attention substantially in excess of the care and attention normally required by a child of the same age”.

This means that eligibility for DCA is not based on the type of impairment or disease, but on the resulting lack of function of body or mind which means the child needs extra care and attention. This care and attention must be required to allow the child to deal with the activities of daily living. The child must be likely to require this level of care and attention for at least 12 months.

The department’s Medical Assessor looks at all the following before giving an opinion on whether your child meets the medical criteria:

- The history of the case
- All medical reports received (your GP fills out a medical report and you should include reports from any relevant specialists).
- Your description of the care and attention required by your child. (The form allows you to state what extra care your child needs under a number of headings.)

Living at home

To qualify for DCA, the child must live at home with the person claiming the allowance for 5 or more days a week. However, DCA may be paid where this is not possible because the parents are sharing care and live apart or the child spends part of the week in residential care.

Parents living apart

DCA may be paid where parents are sharing the full-time care of their disabled child but live apart.

For example, where separated parents have joint custody but the child doesn’t live with either parent for the required 5 continuous days each week. In this case, the DCA is paid to the parent nominated in writing by both parents or to the parent who is getting Child Benefit for the child.

Residential care

A half-rate DCA payment may be paid if a child in residential care goes home for 2 days or more a week, for example, a child who attends residential services from Monday to Friday and goes home at weekends. Children who are being cared for on a full-time basis in residential homes or other institutions are not eligible for the allowance.

Rates

The Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) rate is €309.50 per month.

There is no restriction on the number of children for whom you may claim DCA. (In other words, if you are caring for more than one child who qualifies for DCA, you may claim the monthly allowance for each).

Payment is made on the third Tuesday of every month for the current month.

Hospital stays

Payment may continue for up to 13 weeks if the child is getting medical or other treatment in hospital.

Other payments

Your entitlement to Child Benefit is not affected and you may qualify for Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance if you meet the other conditions. People getting DCA do not need to fill out the medical form when applying for Carer's Allowance.

You can also claim a Carer's Support Grant which is paid automatically each year during the month of June.



APPLICATION PROCESS:

To apply, fill in a Domiciliary Care Allowance form. You can also get an application form by dropping into your **Family Carers Ireland Support Centre**.

You should complete Parts 1 to 5 of the form. Please ask your child's GP/specialist to fill in parts 6 and 7 (the medical section) of the form. You should also attach any reports or other information you have about your child's disability and the impact it has on their care needs.

Note: If your child has a Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD), you are advised to have the medical professional/specialist dealing with your child complete an additional medical form called DomCare3. (Please note that completion of this form is optional since medical professionals may have already provided a comprehensive report on your child's medical condition and care needs. However, if you do not have a recent report from your child's treating medical professional, the DomCare3 form can provide useful additional information).

The completed form will detail your child's conditions, any specific care needs your child might have as a result of their disability and will help the department's medical assessor to form an opinion on eligibility. Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) refers to a group of disorders characterised by delays in the development of socialisation and communication skills. Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder and Rett Syndrome are generally referred to under this category.

What happens when my child reaches the age of 16?

DCA stops when a child reaches 16, so your last DCA payment will be for the month of their 16th birthday. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) will write to you 3 months before your child's 16th birthday to remind you that DCA will stop shortly and tell you about the available options.

At age 16, your child can apply in their own right for Disability Allowance (DA). DA is a means-tested payment for people with disabilities who, as a result of their disability, are substantially restricted in undertaking work that would otherwise be suitable for a person of their age, experience and qualifications.

The qualifying conditions for DA are different from the qualifying conditions for DCA, so your child is not automatically entitled to DA because DCA was in payment.

The means test for Disability Allowance assesses the means of your child and your income is not taken into account. Your child should apply a few months before they turn 16 to allow time for their application to be processed. Your entitlement to a Carer's Allowance will only be stopped where on review, it is decided that your child no longer requires full-time care and attention. A Carer's Allowance may be reviewed at any time to ensure that you continue to meet the conditions.

Appeals

If your application is refused, you can appeal the decision to the independent

Social Welfare Appeals Office. You must appeal within 21 days of the date on the letter notifying you of the decision.

Your local Family Carers Ireland Carer Support Manager can help you in making an appeal. [Click here](#) to find your nearest Centre.

Your application form and supporting documentation should be sent to:

Domiciliary Care Allowance

Social Welfare Services Office
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
College Road
Sligo.

Tel: (071) 915 7100

LoCall: 1890 500 000

(Note: the rates charged for using 1890 [LoCall] numbers may vary)

Household Benefits Package

The Household Benefits Package (HBP) helps with the cost of the TV licence and your electricity or gas bill. Only one person in a household can get the HBP.

You can get the Household Benefits Package if you are aged 70 or over. You do not need to be getting a State pension and the package is not means tested.

In certain circumstances, people under 70 can get the HBP – see ‘Eligibility Criteria’ below. You can also check gas and electricity prices and compare suppliers.

ELIGIBILITY



To get the Household Benefits Package, you must:

- ✓ Be legally and permanently living in the State (full-time, all year round)
- ✓ Be the only person in your household getting the HBP
- ✓ Have the electricity or gas bill in your name (if you are applying for an Electricity or Gas Allowance)

- ✓ Be aged 70 or over. If you are under 70, you must also meet the additional rules for 'people aged under 70' set out below.

People aged under 70

If you are aged under 70, you can now live with other adults (who are not your spouse, cohabitant or civil partner) and still qualify for the Household Benefits Package.

You can get the HBP if you are living with your spouse, cohabitant or civil partner and:

- ✓ You are getting an increase in your qualifying social welfare payment for them (see list of qualifying social welfare payments below) or
- ✓ They are getting their own qualifying social welfare payment listed below or
- ✓ They are getting a social welfare benefit payment not listed below and they satisfy a means test.

You must also meet one of the following 4 conditions:

1. You are between 66 and 70 and are getting:

- State Pension (Contributory)
- State Pension (Non-Contributory)
- Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension
- Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension
- Deserted Wife's Benefit
- An ordinary Garda Widow's Pension from the Department of Justice and Equality
- An equivalent Social Security Pension or Benefit from a country covered by EU Regulations or from a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement.

2. You are aged between 66 and 70 and not getting one of the payments above, but you satisfy a means test - see 'Means test' below.

3. You are under 66 and are getting:

- Disability Allowance
- Invalidity Pension

- Blind Pension
- Incapacity Supplement (for at least 12 months) with Disablement Pension (for at least 12 months)
- An equivalent Social Security Pension or Benefit from a country covered by EU Regulations or from a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement.

4. You are caring for and living with a person who is getting Constant Attendance Allowance.

Carers

You can get the Household Benefits Package, if you are getting **Carer's Allowance** (full or half-rate payment) but you must be living with the person you are caring for.

Means test

If you are aged between 66 and 70 and are not getting a qualifying social welfare payment, you must satisfy a means test.

The amount of means that you are allowed is the same as the current maximum rate of State Pension (Contributory) including any increases that you might get for your age, living alone and dependants, plus €100.

Your weekly means are assessed in a means test.

If your weekly means are less than or equal to the amount of means that you are allowed, then you satisfy the means test and qualify for the Household Benefits Package.

If you are applying for the Household Benefits Package on the basis of the means test, a separate means test form will be sent to you to fill in.

Hospital stays

You can stay in hospital for up to 13 consecutive weeks and continue to get the Household Benefits Package.

Change of circumstances

You must notify the Department if your circumstances change. For example:

- You change address
- You change energy provider
- You move into residential care.

If you change address, you must re-apply for the Household Benefits Package, even if you still meet all the conditions.

What is covered by the Household Benefits Package?

There are 2 allowances in the Household Benefits Package:

Allowance 1

- Electricity Allowance or
- Natural Gas Allowance

Allowance 2

- Free Television Licence

Allowance 1: Electricity or Gas Allowance

If you have an electricity and natural gas supply, you must choose between the Electricity Allowance and Gas Allowance. You can choose only one.

The allowance is paid either to your bank account or post office on the first Tuesday of each month. (If you are collecting your allowance from the post office using your Public Services Card, you have 90 days to collect your payment).

If your energy supplier is Electric Ireland for electricity or Bord Gáis or Flogas for gas, the allowance can be paid directly to your energy supplier as a credit against your bill each month. The DEASP will contact Electric Ireland or Bord Gáis or Flogas who will then apply the allowance, including any backdated credit, onto your next bill. You pay for any electricity or gas you use above the allowance in the normal way.

Allowance 2: Free Television Licence

Once you qualify for the Household Benefits Package, you can get a Free Television Licence from your next renewal date. To get your Free TV Licence, you must select the Television Licence option on the HBP form when you apply.

Rates

Household Benefits Package rates in 2020	
Allowance	
Electricity Allowance	€35 monthly (€1.15 per day)
Gas Allowance	€35 monthly (€1.15 per day)
Television Licence	Free from your next renewal date



APPLICATION PROCESS:

To apply, fill in form **HBI**.

Return your completed application form to the Household Benefits Package section:

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Social Welfare Services
College Road
Sligo
Ireland

If you wish to talk to someone face-to-face about your entitlements, you can visit your local **Family Carers Ireland Support Centre**.

Living Alone Increase

The Living Alone Increase is an extra payment for people on social welfare payments who are living alone.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

If you are 66 years or over and live alone, you will qualify if you are getting one of the following payments:

- ✓ State Pension (Contributory)
- ✓ State Pension (Non-Contributory)
- ✓ Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension
- ✓ Widow's/Widower's Pension under the Occupational Injuries Benefit Scheme
- ✓ Incapacity Supplement under the Occupational Injuries Benefit Scheme
- ✓ Deserted Wife's Benefit

You will also qualify if you are under 66, live alone and are getting Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension, Incapacity Supplement or Blind Pension

- ✓ Living Alone

To get the increase in your payment you must live completely alone. However, there are some exceptions:

- If you are living in an extension of a family member's home, for example, in a granny flat, you can qualify for the increase if you can show that you have facilities to cook and eat alone. You must also have your own living/dining and sleeping accommodation.
- You may also qualify as living alone if you are aged or infirm and have a friend or relative to stay for security reasons at night-time only. The friend or relative must not contribute to the household financially.
- The increase may also be payable if you live alone during the day but stay with relatives or friends at night or if you live alone during the week but have a relative to stay at the weekend (the living alone condition is satisfied as long as the relative has a permanent home address elsewhere).
- People who live in nursing homes will not qualify as they cannot be regarded as living completely or mainly alone.

Rates

Weekly payment from 6 January 2020

Living Alone Increase	€14
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APPLICATION PROCESS:



Fill in a **Living Alone Increase application form**, send the completed form to the section of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection that pays your main pension or benefit.

Your local **Family Carers Ireland Support Centre** will be able to answer any questions about the Living Alone Increase and can help you to complete your form.

Fuel Allowance

A Fuel Allowance is a payment under the National Fuel Scheme to help with the cost of heating your home during the winter months. It is paid to people who are dependent on long-term social welfare payments and who are unable to provide for their own heating needs. Only one Fuel Allowance is paid to a household.

Fuel Allowance is generally paid with your social welfare payment on the same day. You can choose to get Fuel Allowance paid weekly or to get your total allowance paid in 2 lump sums.

The 2019-2020 Fuel Allowance season started on 30 September 2019.

Some UK pensioners living in Ireland may be eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment from the UK. (You can find out more from gov.uk).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:



You may qualify for a Fuel Allowance if you are getting:

- ✓ State Pension (Contributory) or State Pension (Non-Contributory)
- ✓ Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension or Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension

- ✓ Incapacity Supplement under the Occupational Injuries Benefit scheme
- ✓ Blind Pension
- ✓ Invalidity Pension
- ✓ Disability Allowance
- ✓ Deserted Wife's Benefit or Allowance
- ✓ One-Parent Family Payment
- ✓ Guardian's Payment (Contributory) or Guardian's Payment (Non-Contributory)
- ✓ Farm Assist
- ✓ Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance for more than 455 days (over 15 months - it is paid on a 7-day week basis so 15 months' payment is reached after day 455)
- ✓ Jobseeker's Allowance (conditions apply)
- ✓ Jobseeker's Transitional payment
- ✓ Death Benefit under the Occupational Injuries Scheme
- ✓ Social Security Pension from an EE/EEA country or a country with whom Ireland has a bilateral social security agreement (provided there is an equivalent Irish payment).
- ✓ Or if you are taking part in certain schemes - Back to Work Allowance, Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA), Rural Social Scheme, Tús or Community Employment and are entitled to keep your secondary benefits.

And you live alone or only with:

- A dependant spouse, civil partner or cohabitant and/or dependant children (if your dependant is getting half-rate Carer's Allowance - see 'Carer's Allowance' below)
- Other people getting one of the qualifying payments who would also be

eligible for a Fuel Allowance in their own right - check this with Marian

- A person who is getting Carer's Allowance or Carer's Benefit and is caring for you or for your dependant spouse, partner or cohabitant on a full-time basis
- A person getting short-term Jobseeker's Allowance or basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance.

And

- You and other members of your household are unable to provide for your heating needs from your own resources.

You will not qualify for a Fuel Allowance if:

- Your heating needs are met under a deed transferring property
- You live with someone who is not getting one of the qualifying payments for the Fuel Allowance
- You are on a qualifying contributory payment and have income above the means test limits (see below)
- You are getting one of the following contributory payments: Jobseeker's Benefit, Illness Benefit, Occupational Injuries Benefit, Maternity Benefit or Disablement Benefit. Note that you do not qualify for Fuel Allowance if you are getting any of these payments with a qualifying payment, for example, a half-rate Maternity Benefit with a One-Parent Family Payment

Carer's Allowance and Fuel Allowance

Carer's Allowance is not a qualifying payment for Fuel Allowance.

However, you may qualify for Fuel Allowance if you are getting half-rate Carer's Allowance and another qualifying social welfare payment:

- If you are getting a non-contributory social welfare payment and you or your adult dependant is getting a half-rate Carer's Allowance, then Fuel Allowance is payable (if you meet all the criteria)
- If you are getting a contributory social welfare payment and you or your adult dependant is getting a half-rate Carer's Allowance, then the value of the half-rate Carer's Allowance will be assessed in the means test for Fuel Allowance.

Means test for Fuel Allowance

Fuel Allowance is a means-tested payment. If you are getting a non-contributory social welfare payment, you are accepted as satisfying the means test. If you are on an employment support scheme or if you are getting a Back to Education

Allowance, you are entitled to keep your Fuel Allowance if you continue to satisfy the conditions – including the means test.

The Fuel Allowance means test is linked to the maximum rate of the State Pension (Contributory).

You can have a combined weekly income of €100 above the maximum State Pension (Contributory) for your situation and still be eligible for a Fuel Allowance. This means that you can have capital/savings, provided they are less than €58,000, and be eligible for a Fuel Allowance. (€58,000 is equivalent to just over €100 a week under the **capital means assessment rules.**)

For example:

- The assessable income limit for a single person under 80 is €348.30 (€100 plus €248.30)
- The assessable income limit for a couple (where the qualified adult is aged under 66) is €513.70 (€100 plus €248.30 plus €165.40)
- The assessable income limit for a couple (where the qualified adult is aged 66 or over) is €570.80 (€100 plus €248.30 plus €222.50)

If you are over 80, add an extra €10 to the appropriate DEASP payment rate.

Where more than one person in a household qualifies

Only one Fuel Allowance payment is paid to a household. If two or more people who would qualify for a Fuel Allowance live together, a single Fuel Allowance is paid to one qualified person in that household.

Telephone Support Allowance

Since 4 June 2018, if you're getting Fuel Allowance as well as the **Living Alone Increase**, you will automatically qualify for a **Telephone Support Allowance** of €2.50 per week. It is paid separately from your primary payment and is intended

to help with the cost of communications and/or a home alert system. As this allowance is paid automatically to people who qualify, you do not need to apply for it.

Rates

The Fuel Allowance is paid during the fuel season. The fuel season starts on 30 September and runs for 28 weeks.

Since 6 January 2020, the Fuel Allowance increased by €2 per week from €22.50 to €24.50.

Lump sum payments

You can choose to have your Fuel Allowance paid in two lump sums and these are usually paid out in October and January in the relevant year.

If you have not already chosen to be paid in 2 lump sums and you wish to do so - see 'Choosing lump sum or weekly payments' below.



APPLICATION PROCESS:

New applicants for Fuel Allowance need to fill in **application form NFS 1**. This application form is also available from your local Family Carers Ireland Support Centre

If you apply for the Fuel Allowance after the start of the Fuel Allowance season, it will not be backdated.

If you are getting a payment from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection or a social security payment from a country covered by EU Regulations or a country with which Ireland has a bilateral social security agreement, the Fuel Allowance will be included in your weekly payment. You do not need to reapply for the Fuel Allowance each year as long as your circumstances remain the same and you continue to get the same social welfare payment.

If you are not getting a social welfare payment, your Fuel Allowance can be paid directly into your account in a financial institution or you can collect the allowance at your local post office.

Choosing lump sum or weekly payments

- You can choose to get your Fuel Allowance paid weekly or in 2 lump sums
- If you got your total allowance for the 2019-2020 fuel season paid in 2 lump sums, your Fuel Allowance for 2020-2021 will automatically be paid in 2 lump sums
- If you got your allowance for the 2019-2020 fuel season paid weekly, your Fuel Allowance for 2020-2021 will automatically be paid weekly
- If you want to switch to lump sums or a weekly payment for 2020-2021, you must fill in **form CPF 1** and send it to the section that pays your primary payment before the middle of September 2020
- This form is also available from your local post office or from your local **Family Carers Ireland Support Centre**

Supplementary Welfare Allowance

Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance is a weekly allowance paid to people who do not have enough income to meet their needs and those of their families

COVID-19 (coronavirus)

If your employment (or self-employment) has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, or if you are sick or caring for someone who is sick, read our document on COVID-19 (coronavirus) and social welfare payments.

You can read our document **on Employment rights during the COVID-19 restrictions**.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

If you have no income, you may be entitled to the basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA). If your weekly income is below the Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate for your family size, a payment may be made to bring your income up to the appropriate Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate.

If you have claimed a social welfare benefit or pension but it has not yet been paid and you have no other income, you may qualify for basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance while you are waiting for your payment. However, the amount paid while you are waiting will be deducted from the arrears of your social welfare payment.

If you have returned to work, you can claim the basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance for up to 30 days while you are waiting for your wages. Supplementary Welfare Allowance is not a taxable source of income.

Conditions

You will normally qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance if you satisfy the following conditions:

- You are living in the State
- You satisfy the means test
- You have applied for any other benefit or allowance you may be entitled to
- You have registered for work with your local Intreo Centre if you are of working age
- You satisfy the habitual residence condition.

Means test

The main items taken into account for the means test include:

- All cash income
- Most social welfare and Health Service Executive payments are taken into account
- Generally, all financial compensation is taken into account. However, certain types of compensation are not assessed as income.

The following payments are not taken into account:

- Child Benefit, Domiciliary Care Allowance, Blind Welfare Allowance, Guardian's Payment (Contributory), Guardian's Payment (Non-Contributory) and the Carer's Support Grant.
- Foster care allowance
- The Consumer Directed Home Support (CDHS) from the HSE
- Maintenance grants paid by SUSI
- Payments under the Department of Education and Skills' school transport scheme for children with special educational needs
- Payments under the 1916 Bursary Fund from the Department of Education and Skills
- University payments made under the Higher Education Scholarships for Adult Learners of up to a maximum of €7000 per year
- Payments made by Sport Ireland under the International Carding Scheme.

The value of any benefit or privilege: If you are 24 years of age or under and

you are living with a parent or a step-parent in the family home, some of your parents' income will also be taken into account in the assessment for Supplementary Welfare Allowance. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection calls this an assessment of the 'benefit and privilege' you get from living with your parents.

The value of investments, savings or property (but not the value of your own home) is calculated as follows:

Capital	Weekly means assessed
First €5,000	Not taken into account
Next €10,000	€1 per €1,000
Next €25,000	€2 per €1,000
Balance	€4 per €1,000

If you are married, in a civil partnership or cohabiting, the total income of the couple is added together in the means test.

Rates

The basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance is made up of a personal rate for the applicant and additional amounts for any adult dependant and/or child dependant(s). A child dependant is a person under the age of 18 who lives with you and depends on you for financial support. If you have been getting SWA for at least 26 weeks, the age limit is 22 for a child dependant in full-time education or up to the end of the academic year after their 22nd birthday.



APPLICATION PROCESS:

You should contact the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection's Community Welfare Service at your local office.

Back to Education Allowance

This scheme allows a person to enter full time education and receive a payment equal to full rate Carer's Allowance. (Full rate Carer's Allowance is paid even where the carer may have been in receipt of a partial rate Carer's Allowance).

Study option

Two study options are available under the BTEA scheme:

- Second-level option
- Third-level option

Second-level option

You can attend a second-level course of education at any secondary, community, comprehensive or vocational school. The course must be full-time and lead to a certificate recognised by the Department of Education and Skills or approved by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), for example, Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, Post Leaving Certificate or a City and Guilds Certificate. An Access or Foundation course is considered to be a second-level course for BTEA purposes.

Third-level option

You can attend any third-level course of education in an approved third-level institution (university, institute of education or third-level college). The course must be a full-time day course and be approved for the Student Grant Scheme or be approved by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Note that not all QQI courses are approved for BTEA.

Undergraduate courses

In general, you must be starting your third-level course at year one. However, you may be eligible for BTEA if you:

- ✓ Are exempt from part of your course because of a qualification you received in a previous course. For example, you have a higher certificate in a course that you now wish to take to degree level.
- ✓ Completed a year (or years) of your course as a part-time student
- ✓ Completed earlier years before becoming unemployed or receiving statutory redundancy
- ✓ Are permitted by your school or college to proceed to the next year of a course having dropped out or deferred a year (due to mitigating circumstances)

- ✓ If you were getting a One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) while in full-time education and were affected by age-related changes to OFP. People in this situation may be admitted to BTEA mid-course.

Qualifying for BTEA

In general, to qualify for the BTEA you must be over 21, or over 24 for postgraduate courses - see also 'Age limits' below - and have been getting a qualifying social welfare payment. You must always have been accepted onto a qualifying course.

Qualifying social welfare payments include:

- Carer's Allowance
- Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension
- Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension
- Disability Allowance
- Invalidity Pension
- Incapacity Supplement (based on a life Disablement Pension)
- Illness Benefit for 2 years or more. (However, periods spent on Illness Benefit can count towards the qualifying period if you qualify from another payment. Half of the qualifying period must relate to the qualifying payment).

Age limits

To qualify for the Back to Education Allowance, you must be at least 21 years of age. You must be at least 24 for a third-level postgraduate course.

Monitoring arrangements

You must provide a certificate from the school/college confirming your registration, commencement and attendance at the course. You must supply this information before payment can begin. During the course of the academic year, you may be asked to provide confirmation that you are still taking part in the course.

Rates

If you are aged over 26, your weekly BTEA rate will be equal to your previous social protection payment (the payment that qualified you for participation in the scheme). You may also qualify for increases for a qualified adult and qualified children. You must always have established an entitlement to a qualifying payment immediately before starting BTEA, even if you were previously on

an employment or training scheme. The BTEA rate is based on this qualifying payment.

Cost of Education Allowance

Since September 2017, you get an annual Cost of Education Allowance of €500 if you are getting BTEA and you have a dependant child.

Keeping your extra benefits

If you qualify for the Back to Education Allowance, you can keep your entitlement to any extra benefits you already have, for example, Fuel Allowance or Rent Supplement. However, any increase in income may affect your entitlement to Rent Supplement or the amount of supplement you get. For example, this can happen if you have additional income from part-time work.



APPLICATION PROCESS:

When you are accepted on a course, you should notify the DEASP by filling in the Back to Education Allowance application form, which is also available from your Intreo Centre. All new BTEA claims for jobseekers must be recommended by a DEASP Case Officer before a decision can be made on your BTEA entitlement.

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

P.O. Box 1650
Dublin 1
Ireland.

Tel: (01) 704 3300

(If calling from outside Ireland please call +353 1 704 3300)

LoCall: 1890 928 400

(Note: the rates charged for using 1890 [LoCall] numbers may vary)