



Irish National
Organisation of
the Unemployed

19th Edition
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WORKING FOR WORK

Exploring welfare, work, education and
training options for unemployed people

19th Edition

also in this edition

- Social Welfare Rates of Payment • Partial Capacity Benefit •
- Redundancy Information • Rent Supplement Levels •
- Social Welfare Appeals • Mortgage Interest Supplement •



WORKING FOR WORK

A Handbook Exploring Options for Unemployed People

**Published by the
Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed.**

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FOREWORD

The INOU is very pleased to publish the 19th edition of Working for Work.

Working for Work is primarily aimed at unemployed people and others distant from the labour market. The publication is also a key resource for information providers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Robbert J. Lynch, Manager of the Welfare to Work Section and Information Officers Aidan McCarthy, Joanne O'Reilly and Richard MacRichie for editing this edition and other INOU staff members who assisted in compiling, editing and checking the accuracy of the information contained in this publication. Thanks also go to the staff of the Department of Social Protection, Department of Education and Skills, FÁS and the Revenue Commissioners who took time and trouble to comment on the detail of the contents of the book.

I would also like to thank the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Education and Skills for the funding provided to publish Working for Work.

All Social Welfare rates referred to in this book are valid from January 2012.

We welcome comments and suggestions on how we can improve Working for Work.

The publication is also available on the INOU website – www.inou.ie

John Stewart,
Co-ordinator
INOUE



The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

Mission Statement

The INOU is a federation of unemployed people, unemployed centres, unemployed groups, community organisations and Trade Unions. The INOU represents and defends the rights and interests of those who want decent employment and cannot obtain it. We promote and campaign for policies to achieve full employment for all. We also campaign for an acceptable standard of living for unemployed people and their dependants. The INOU is an anti-sectarian, anti-racist, non-party political organisation which promotes equality of opportunity within society.

The organisation was founded in 1987 and now comprises over 200 local centres, community based organisations, NGOs, Trade Unions, branches of unemployed people and other groups throughout the country.

We work at local and national levels on the issues affecting unemployed people. We support local groups through services such as training, welfare rights information and analysis of Government policies.

Not all INOU affiliates provide welfare rights or welfare-to-work information – Chapter 7 ■ provides a list of those affiliates who provide such services.

Key aims of the INOU include to:

- Seek to represent the interests and views of all unemployed people and their dependants at a national level
- Campaign for an acceptable standard of living for all unemployed people and their dependants
- Campaign towards the achievement of full employment at an acceptable rate of pay
- Assist the establishment and development of local unemployed groups
- Build on the common interest between the unemployed and employed



Services provided by the INOU

● Information

We are recognised as experts in the field of Welfare Rights and Welfare to Work information provision. We provide a telephone Welfare to Work information service to individuals and affiliated organisations. We also produce and disseminate practical information about Social Welfare and other entitlements in leaflet and booklet form and through our websites – www.inou.ie and www.redundancy.ie.

● Supports for people facing redundancy

We provide a range of information and training services aimed at people who have recently or are about to lose their jobs as a result of redundancies. This work involves delivering information services directly to people facing redundancy at their place of work and the production of tailored welfare rights publications which focus on the welfare rights information needs of people facing redundancy.

● Training

We provide a comprehensive Welfare to Work information and skills based Training Service covering modules such as Welfare to Work, Introduction to Social Welfare Appeals, Taxation and Welfare to Work and Your Rights at Work. Details of our training programmes are published in our Training and Events Calendar which is available on our website. The INOU is also a registered FETAC training provider.

● Membership – Join us, it's Free

We welcome applications for membership from individual unemployed people. You can join the INOU as someone who is Unemployed, on a training course, on an Active Labour Market Programme (e.g. Community Employment programme). You may join simply to show support for our work or you may wish to become involved in looking for change at a local or national level. The benefits of membership include:

- A **FREE** hard copy of the comprehensive welfare rights, training, education and jobseeking publication, Working for Work
- Access to the INOU's **FREE**, expert, confidential and impartial Welfare Rights Information services
- An invitation to an introductory meeting in the INOU
- Invitations to meetings with other INOU Individual Members every six weeks to two months.

See inside back cover for more details.

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CHAPTER 1

Social Welfare Payments

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Introduction

The Social Welfare system in Ireland has become more complex and complicated. In our work with affiliates, information providers and members of the public the INOU has found that many people are not aware of the full range of payments and supports available through the Department of Social Protection and other state agencies. As a result many people do not access payments to which they may be entitled.

In this chapter we provide basic information about Social Welfare Payments - what payments are available, what your rights are, what you may be entitled to and how to get them, with more in-depth information about specific payments and issues in later chapters.

The Department of Social Protection – (DSP)

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) administers and manages the delivery of statutory and non-statutory social and family schemes and services in Ireland. Its main responsibility is to promote a caring society through income and other support services, enabling active participation in society, promoting social inclusion and supporting families. Social welfare payments and HSE supports can be summarised under five broad headings:

1. Social Insurance Payments
2. Social Assistance Payments
3. Supplementary Welfare Allowance Payments
4. Health Service Executive Supports
5. Universal Supports

1. Social Insurance Payments

- Jobseeker's Benefit (JB)
- Illness Benefit (IB)
- Occupational Injuries Benefit (OIB)
- Maternity Benefit
- Adoptive Benefit
- Health and Safety Benefit
- Invalidity Pension (IP)
- State Pension (Transition)
- State Pension (Contributory)
- Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory Pension
- Treatment Benefit
- Bereavement Grant
- Guardian's Payment (Contributory)
- Carer's Benefit

2. Social Assistance Payments

- Jobseeker's Allowance (JA)
- Pre-Retirement Allowance (PRA)
- One-Parent Family Payment (OPFP)
- Disability Allowance (DA)
- Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB)
- Family Income Supplement (FIS)
- Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension
- State Pension (Non-Contributory)
- Guardian's Payment (Non-Contributory)
- Blind Person's Pension
- Farm Assist
- Fuel Allowance
- Carer's Allowance

3. Supplementary Welfare Allowance Payments

- Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance Payments
- Exceptional Needs Payments
- Urgent Needs Payments

4. Health Service Executive Supports

- Dental/Optical Scheme for Medical Card Holders
- Medical Cards

5. Universal Supports

- Child Benefit
- Free Travel (aged 66 and over)

You have a legal right to receive these payments if you can meet the qualifying conditions and, where necessary, satisfy a means test.

Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information on the payments listed. They will help you determine if you qualify for any of those payments and assist you in applying for them.

Your Family and Social Welfare

The Irish Social Welfare system is organised around the family. If you qualify for a social welfare payment you get a payment for yourself, which is called the 'personal rate' of payment. You may also get extra payments for adult and child dependants – called Qualified Adult and Qualified Child payments.

Qualified Adult Dependant – A qualified adult is your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant. You can get an allowance for your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant once they are mainly or fully supported by you.

- **Benefit payments:** If your Qualified Adult is earning €310.00 gross (before tax) or less per week, they will be regarded as a qualified adult for payment.

If a spouse, civil partner or cohabitant earns up to €100.00 gross per week then you qualify for a full Qualified Adult increase. If they earn between €100.01 and €310.00 gross (before tax) per week a tapered qualified adult payment will be paid. This applies to certain benefit payments only.

- **Allowance Payments:** Allowance payments are means tested, any income a Qualified Adult may have from employment, pensions, savings or investments can be assessed as means, please see Chapter 4 ■ for more information.
- You cannot claim for your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant as a qualified adult if they are claiming a social welfare payment in their own right or are taking part in a non-craft full-time FÁS / Solas course or designated vocational training courses.

Individual Claims – If a couple are living together each person can make a claim in their own right as long as they each satisfy the conditions of the scheme. Where a couple are both receiving individual Social Assistance payments, such as Jobseeker’s Allowance, the couple’s individual payments are added together. The total amount cannot be more than the family rate which would be payable if only one person claimed for the family, i.e. total of payment for Main Claimant + Qualified Adult + Qualified Child/ren. Where a couple are both receiving individual Social Insurance payments, such as Jobseeker’s Benefit, each receive the full personal rate, no limitation applies. If both persons of a couple wish to claim Jobseeker’s Allowance both persons of the couple can sign-on as individuals if they are both Genuinely Seeking Work – see Genuinely Seeking Work in this chapter. Although the couple will not end up with any more money, in this instance, they may have more options open to them if they are both registered as unemployed.

Separate Payments – If you are a Qualified Adult and you feel that your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant is not making sufficient contribution towards your maintenance you can ask at the local Social Welfare office for “separate payments”. The personal rate and qualified adult rate will be added together and then split evenly between you and your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant. The full rate of any Qualified Child payments on the claim may be given in full to one of the couple.

NB: If you opt for separate payments the person who made the claim will have to satisfy the standard qualifying conditions of the scheme as normal but the qualified adult would not. For Social Assistance payments, the means test will apply to both the Main Claimant and the Qualified Adult. Separate payments do not mean that they are both signing on.

Qualified Child Dependants – You can also claim a payment for your child dependants. If you qualify for a Qualified Adult payment on your claim and your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant earns up to €310 you may qualify for a full child dependent increase. If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant earns between €310.01 and €400, you may qualify for half the child

dependant increase. This applies to Jobseeker's Benefit, Occupational Injury Benefit and Disablement Benefit (Incapacity Supplement) and Invalidity Pension claims received after 5 July 2012. If you are the only adult in the family you will receive a full rate of payment for your child.

You can only claim for a Qualified Child dependant until they reach the age of 18 years if you are in receipt of:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Jobseeker's Benefit
- Illness Benefit
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA).

Child Dependants in Education: You can apply for a Qualified Child payment for a child between 18 and 22 in full-time education, up to the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of 22. This applies to the following payments:

- Long-term Jobseeker's Allowance (after 15 months)
- Deserted Wife's Benefit, **or**
- Any other long-term Social Welfare payment
- Short-term payments, after six months* in payment (**156 days paid**)

* The six month period may be reduced in cases where you received a previous qualifying Social Welfare payment.

Child Dependants not living with you: If you are paying maintenance for a child who does not live with you, you may be able to claim a Qualified Child payment for them on your Jobseeker's payment.

Usually a parent can only claim an increase in their payment for a child if the child lives with them for at least half of the week. However, even if the child does not live with you, you can claim an increase in respect of your child if:

- The other parent is NOT in receipt of a social welfare claim (including Family Income Supplement);
- You pay at least €30 maintenance each week per child or provide an equivalent amount of support

This also applies to Disability Allowance, Supplementary Welfare Allowance and a number of other payments.

Child Dependants – One Parent Families: The age limit for receipt of payment for a Qualified Child on the One Parent Family Payment is being gradually reduced to 7 years, this means that an OPFP customer must have at least one child under the qualifying age. This reduction to the age limit is being applied to new and existing customers on a phased basis. It will not affect any existing claimants (e.g. claimants before 3 May 2012) until 2013.

Customers, whose claim for One-Parent Family Payment started between 27 April 2011 and 3 May 2012, only qualify to receive the payment until their youngest child reaches 14. This was announced in Budget 2011.

From 3rd May 2012, a new OFP claimant must have a qualified child under 12 years of age.

Over the period 2012 to 2015 entitlement to One Parent Family Payment depends on:

1. When the initial claim for One-Parent Family Payment was made **and**
2. The age of the youngest child.

If your claim started on or before **27 April 2011**, payment will continue to be paid for your children under age 18, or between 18-22 years if in full-time education until the end of the 2012/2013 academic year. Payment will stop when your youngest child reaches, age 17 (in 2013), when the youngest child is age 16 (in 2014) and when the youngest child reaches 7 in 2015.

If your claim started between **27 April 2011 and 2 May 2012**, payment will continue until your youngest child reaches age 14 (in 2012), age 12 (2013), age 10 (2014) and age 7 in 2015.

If your claim started on or **after 3 May 2012** payment will continue until your youngest child reaches age 12 (in 2012), age 10 (2013) and age 7 in 2014.

School Leavers: Young people who have just left school cannot sign-on for Jobseeker's Allowance for three months. In this case a family that is dependent on Social Welfare is entitled to continue to claim a Qualified Child Allowance until the young person can sign-on in their own right.

Cohabitation – Entitlement to a range of Social Welfare payments may be affected by any determination of Cohabitation i.e. that you are living with a partner or civil partner as a couple – see Cohabitation at the end of this chapter.

Social Insurance Payments

People in employment make Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions which are deducted from their wages each week. These payments, or 'stamps' as they are traditionally known, are a means for people to insure themselves through the State, against any event that may cause them to be out of the workforce.

The Department of Social Protection keep a record of all social insurance payments, both paid and credited, under your Personal Public Service (PPS) number. Your PPS number is very important, so keep it safe, as you will need it when you are dealing with the Department.

Classes of Social Insurance Contributions

There are a total of 11 types of PRSI 'classes' in the Social Welfare system. Generally speaking, there are usually two main types of Social Insurance 'classes' relevant to people who are employed or self-employed:

PRSI Class A – This class of contribution covers employees from age 16 to 66 in industrial, commercial and service-type employment who have reckonable

pay of €38 or more per week from all employments as well as Public Servants recruited from 6 April 1995. Participants on Community Employment pay class A8 or A9 PRSI, but this still counts as a full Class A PRSI contribution. Participants on FÁS Training Courses do not pay PRSI contributions, but receive credited contributions for the duration of the training course.

Social Insurance Payments – Class A

- Jobseeker's Benefit (JB)
- Illness Benefit (IB)
- Occupational Injuries Benefit (OIB)
- Disability Benefit (incapacity Supplement)
- Maternity Benefit
- Adoptive Benefit
- Health and Safety Benefit
- Widow's/Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory Pension
- Carer's Benefit (CB)
- State Pension (Transition)
- State Pension (Contributory)
- Treatment Benefit
- Bereavement Grant
- Guardian's Payment (Contributory)
- Invalidity Pension (IP)

PRSI Class S – This applies to self-employed people, including certain company directors, certain persons in receipt of Approved Retirement Funds (ARF's), people in business on their own account and people with income from investments and rents. It only covers a limited number of social insurance payments

Social Insurance Payments – Class S

- State Pension (Contributory)
- Guardian's Payment (Contributory)
- Bereavement Grant
- Widow's/er's or Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory Pension
- Maternity Benefit
- Adoptive Benefit

For information on the full range of PRSI Classes visit the Department of Social Protection website www.welfare.ie

Claiming a Social Insurance Payment

Qualifying for a payment

In order to qualify for a Social Welfare payment using your social insurance record you will need:

- A specific number of paid PRSI contributions from the time you first started working.
- A specific number of paid or credited PRSI contributions in the relevant tax year, also known as the Governing Contribution Year.
- To satisfy the conditions of the particular payment e.g. for Illness Benefit

you must produce medical certificates, for Jobseeker's Benefit you must prove you are genuinely seeking work.

Benefit Year

This is the calendar year in which you are making your claim for a Social Insurance Payment. The Benefit Year starts on the first Monday in January.

Relevant Tax Year/Governing Contribution Year

In order to qualify for a social insurance payment you must have the required number of PRSI contributions in the Relevant Tax Year/Governing Contribution Year (GCV). For all Social Insurance payments (benefit payments), except Invalidity Pension, the Relevant Tax Year/Governing Contribution Year is two years before the year in which you make your claim.

Benefit Year	Contribution/Tax Year
1st Monday in January 2012	1st Jan. 2010 – 31st Dec 2010
1st Monday in January 2013	1st Jan. 2011 – 31st Dec 2011
1st Monday in January 2014	1st Jan. 2012 – 31st Dec 2012

- Invalidity Pension:** The Relevant Tax Year/Governing Contribution Year for Invalidity Pension is different. For the Invalidity Pension the Relevant Tax Year/Governing Contribution year is the year before the benefit year. So, for example, claims made in 2011 will use 2010 as the Relevant Tax Year/Governing Contribution Year.

Types of Social Insurance Contributions

Credited PRSI Contributions

Credits or credited contributions are social insurance contributions given to qualified persons who are unable to continue making paid PRSI contributions in circumstances such as unemployment and illness. Their purpose is to help protect the social insurance entitlements of people during periods when they may not be able to make paid contributions. Credits can be very important to continue your PRSI record for future entitlement to some short term payments and pensions.

If, at any stage since starting work, you have no PRSI contributions paid or credited for two full tax years in a row, you cannot get credits until you return to work and pay PRSI contributions for at least 26 weeks. If contributions are paid at PRSI Classes S, J, K or M for 26 weeks then this would not count for the purpose of getting credits.

Voluntary PRSI Contributions

Voluntary Contributions are contributions you can opt to pay if you are under the age of 66 and are not covered by compulsory PRSI by way of insurable employment, self-employment or credited contributions. Payment of Voluntary

Contributions can help maintain or improve your contributory pension entitlements. They do not provide cover for any short term benefits such as Jobseeker's, Illness, Maternity or Treatment Benefit.

You may choose to pay voluntary contributions, provided you meet certain conditions if you:

- are no longer covered by a PRSI scheme on a compulsory basis in Ireland,
- are no longer covered by a PRSI scheme on a compulsory or voluntary basis in any other EU country,
- are under age 66,
- satisfy qualifying conditions.

To become a voluntary contributor you must have paid at least 260 weeks PRSI in either employment **or** self-employment **and** apply within 12 months of the end of the contribution year during which you last paid compulsory insurance or you were last awarded a credited contribution **and** agree to pay voluntary contributions from the start of the contribution week that follows the week in which you leave compulsory insurance. Between April 2013 and April 2015 this is to move from 260 paid weeks PRSI to 520 paid weeks PRSI.

You can pay voluntary contributions as a lump sum before the end of a contribution year **or** by an instalment every three or six months during a contribution year. There are **three** different rates of voluntary contributions – High, Low and Special rate. Please contact the INOU for more information – (01) 856 0088.

Non-payment of PRSI by an employer

If you have been employed and you are made redundant or have simply lost your job, your PRSI contributions paid during employment may entitle you to a Social Insurance payment such as Jobseeker's Benefit. If however, it transpires that your employer was not making the required PRSI contributions you may be awarded the appropriate PRSI contributions by the Department of Social Protection following an investigation. Contact the INOU for more information (01) 856 0088.

Credits

Homemaker's Scheme – From 6 April 1994, if you have left the workforce for a long period of time to care for a child/ren under 12 years of age, or to look after an incapacitated person, you may qualify to have this period disregarded for the purpose of pension calculation. You must have paid a PRSI contribution that would cover you for the State Pension (Contributory) and satisfy all scheme conditions.

Leaving Work due to Illness – If you are unfit for work because of illness, injury or disability, you may qualify for 'credits'. 'Credits' are normally awarded if you are getting Illness Benefit, Invalidity Pension or Occupational Injury Benefit. If you work in the Public Service and pay PRSI at class B, C or D and you have to give up work because of ill-health, you can maintain your social insurance

record by sending in medical certificates once a year. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

Pre-entry credits – are credited to a person’s record when they first start paying full rate PRSI.

Student credits – may be awarded when a person re-enters insurable employment following completion of a course in full-time education subject to certain conditions. These are only reckonable for short term benefits.

The number of PRSI contributions required, both paid and credited, will vary according to the type of social insurance payment you apply for. Some social insurance payments only last for a fixed period – most are subject to tax (see Chapter 5 ■).

Social insurance payments are not means tested for the person claiming. This means that your social insurance payment will not be affected by any savings or property that you may have. However, if you want to claim an increase for an adult or child dependant, your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant’s means will determine whether or not you qualify for an increased payment.

Check with your local Social Welfare Office or the Department’s Information Service, on 1890 66 22 44, to see if you have the right amount of paid and credited contributions to qualify for different payments. Remember to have your PPS number ready when you make the call.

Social Assistance Payments

People who have become unemployed, ill, disabled, who act as a carer, are elderly or are lone parents and do not have the necessary PRSI contributions may qualify for specific Social Assistance payments from the Department of Social Protection.

To qualify you must:

- prove you are eligible for a particular payment, e.g. a One-Parent Family Payment applicant must prove they are parenting alone
- pass a means test (subject to various disregards)
- satisfy the habitual residence condition
- satisfy the medical criteria, e.g. for Disability Allowance

The following are Social Assistance payments:

- Jobseeker’s Allowance (JA)
- Pre-Retirement Allowance (PRA)
- One Parent Family Payment (OPFP)
- Disability Allowance (DA)
- Carer’s Allowance (CA)
- Family Income Supplement (FIS)
- Fuel Allowance

- State Pension (Non-Contributory)
- Widows/Widowers or Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension
- Guardian's Payment (Non-Contributory)
- Blind Persons Pension
- Farm Assist

The Means Test

All social assistance payments are means-tested but the means test can differ depending on the type of payment you are applying for. The Department's rules on means testing are set out in its guidelines, which are available at www.welfare.ie. If you are not happy with a decision on the means test and feel you are being treated unreasonably, you may have the right to appeal the decision (See Appeals later in this chapter ■).



An Appeals Officer's must decide cases in accordance with the Social Welfare legislation, as applied to the facts before them in each individual case. Appeals Officer's are not bound by guidelines drawn up by the Department for its Deciding Officers/Designated Persons

The following income is taken into account for the means test:

- Cash income belonging to you or your spouse, civil partner, cohabitant
- Any property you have (other than your own home)
- Income from the Rent A Room Scheme (certain disregards apply)
- The value of any savings, investments, pension shares or land
- Any maintenance paid to you by an ex-spouse or partner
- Parental income if you are under 25 and living in your parents' home

a. Cash income

This includes income from you or your spouse, civil partner, cohabitant's employment, private pensions, short-term letting on land owned.

Income not assessed for the means test

- payments from the Department of Social Protection
- the maintenance portion of a VEC Higher Education Grant
- Child Benefit from another EU member State
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance from the Dept. of Social Protection
- Rent or Mortgage Interest Supplement
- income earned under certain schemes in Gaeltacht areas
- income from certain non-profit making charitable organisations
- income from the HIV Haemophilia Fund and the Hepatitis C Fund
- any amount received as a training allowance while undergoing a course of rehabilitation training by an organisation approved by the Minister for Health.

- income from a Disability Pension or a Wound Pension under the Army Pension Acts 1923-1980 or a combination of allowances in so far as they do not exceed €104 per year (includes British War Pension from UK).
- compensation awards by the residential institutions redress board
- income from insurable seasonal employment if the seasonal employment has finished

Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for further information or details on any additional exceptions.

Income disregards

There are certain disregards allowed on income, for example, if you make a claim for Jobseeker's Allowance and your spouse is working then their PRSI, pension payments and union subscriptions would be deducted from their gross earnings before the means test is done. There are a range of different income disregards for different types of payment. These are explained in Chapter 4 ■

a. Pensions: The value of a pension fund is only assessable for means when a person has access to the pension fund. Any benefits in the form of a regular payment will be treated as income for means purposes. The value of any cash otherwise available from a pension fund will be assessed on the basis of the capital valuation of that fund. Where a Personal Retirement Bond or Buy-Out-Bond is held (a bond which offers a lump-sum payment at a specific point in time) the terms of this bond will determine what and when benefits are payable to the holder of the bond. A person should provide details of the bond to the Department in order to prove that they do not have access to any of the benefits of the bond – i.e. cash income.

Some pensions restrict access to funds until the beneficiary of the pension reaches the age of 60. These legal restrictions, in accordance with Revenue rules, means that this type of pension cannot be cashed, sold, borrowed against or traded in any way. These pensions cannot realise any financial value until the beneficiary reaches the age of 60, and as such cannot be assessed as means or as a source of income for the means test. For further information on this contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

b. Property: The Department will assess the capital value of any property you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant own, including any second home, holiday home, unoccupied apartment, residential or commercial buildings in Ireland or abroad. The value of your own home will not be assessed. Income from the Rent A Room scheme will be assessed, but certain disregards will apply. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

c. Investments, savings, shares or land: The capital value of any money you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant have in the bank or credit union, stocks, bonds, shares or land will also be assessed.

The method of assessing capital for entitlement to Social Assistance payments is as follows:

Capital	Weekly Means Assessed
First €20,000	Disregarded
Next €10,000	€1.00 per €1,000
Next €10,000	€2.00 per €1,000
Balance	€4.00 per €1,000

- **Disability Allowance:** The first €50,000 is disregarded
- **Supplementary Welfare Allowance:** The means test for Supplementary Welfare Allowance, i.e. basic SWA payment, Rent or Mortgage Interest Supplement is different – See Chapter 2 ■

Example

For someone claiming Jobseeker's Allowance the value of property, savings or capital is assessed in the following way:

– Money in the credit union	€25,000
– Assessable savings (€25,000 - €20,000)	€5,000
– Total weekly means (€1.00 per €1,000 x 5)	€5.00 per week
– Deduction from payment	€5.00 per week

In this case, only €5,000 of the €25,000 in the credit union is assessable as means. The value of this €5,000 is €5.00 per week.

If you are of pension age of 66 or over and receiving any of the following payments:

- State Pension (Non-Contributory)
- Widow's/Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension
- Prisoner's Wife's Allowance (PWA)

Up to €190,500 made on the sale of your main home will not be counted against your means-tested payment provided the sale is agreed after you reach 66 years of age.

If the Department know, or suspect, that you deliberately got rid of any money or property (without just cause, good reason or without acceptable documentary evidence) in order to qualify for a payment, you will be assessed with the value of the means.

The Department's officials will ask you to provide documentation such as bank statements etc. for the means test. If you don't provide this documentation the Deciding Officer will not be able to make a decision on your claim.

d. Maintenance

If you are separated from your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant and receive maintenance from them, this will be assessed. However, for Jobseeker's Allowance, One Parent Family Payment and several other schemes, vouched housing costs up to a maximum of €95.23 can be deducted from the maintenance payment and half the balance will be assessed as means.

e. Benefit and Privilege

In the means test for Jobseeker's Allowance and Supplementary Welfare Allowance payments, if you are 24 years of age or under and living at home then your parents' income will be taken into account for the means test. This assessment is known as Benefit and Privilege and is assessed because there is a certain benefit from living in the family home.

Benefit and Privilege does not apply:

- To persons 25 years of age or over on Jobseeker's Allowance and living in their parents' home
- Where a son/daughter is claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and is living in their parents' home with a spouse, civil partner or cohabitant
- If you return to the parental home having had an independent life-style elsewhere in Ireland or abroad for at least 3 years.
- To a person with dependent children

Assessing Benefit and Privilege:

The gross income of the parent/s you live with is taken minus certain disregards and then 34% of the balance is assessed.

Income counted for Benefit and Privilege:

Income from insurable employment, self-employment, from all pensions, rental income from property or land, maintenance payments, Social Welfare payments (few exceptions), FÁS training allowances and from Community Employment schemes.

The Department will allow the following deductions:

- Income tax (Including the Universal Social Charge)
- PRSI
- Health Insurance Contributions
- Superannuation / PRSA
- Union subscriptions
- Rent/mortgage payments

Additional Disregards

There is a further €600 disregard for a two parent family and €470 for a one parent family. There is a €30 disregard for each child up to 18 years of age and for children over 18 years of age in full time education.

Deductions not allowed:

No deductions are allowed for travelling expenses, life assurance premiums, club subscriptions, or saving schemes. In cases where parents have property other than the family home and that property is yielding an income, the net income of that property is assessed e.g. rental income less expenses such as mortgage repayments, insurance costs, repairs etc.

Example:

John is 23 and claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, which would normally be €188.00. He lives with his parents and two school going siblings. His mother does not work and his father has net (after tax, etc.) earnings of €900 a week.

Benefit and Privilege is calculated as follows:

Income:	€900.00
Deductions:	
— Personal allowances for a two parent family:	€600.00
— Sibling disregard:	€60.00
— Rent/mortgage payment:	€120.00
Total Allowances per week	€780
Means assessable (€900 minus €780) =	€120.00
Means assessed (€120 x 34%) =	€41.00
Jobseeker's Allowance: (€188.00 - €41.00)	€147.00

Please note: If John was under 20 his JA would only be €100 per week. Under this example the Benefit and Privilege rule would reduce his payment to €59.00. This also applies to new claimants aged 20 – 21. For those new claimants aged 22 – 24, the JA rate is €144.00. Accordingly, after Benefit and Privilege is applied, their payment is €103.00

- Benefit and Privilege does not apply to people claiming One-Parent Family Payment who are living in their parents' home.
- If a person's only source of income is from their parents and means from parental income is so high that their payment would be less than €40, then they will receive a minimum payment of €40 per week.

Jobseeker's Payments (JB and JA)

The main social welfare payments for unemployed people are either Jobseeker's Benefit (JB) or Jobseeker's Allowance (JA). This section aims to make you familiar with rules you need to know in order to apply for and continue to receive these payments.

How to qualify for JB or JA

For all unemployment payments you must be:

- unemployed (fully unemployed or unemployed for at least 3 days in 6)
- aged between 18 and 66
- available for full-time work
- capable of full-time work
- genuinely seeking employment

For Jobseeker's Benefit you must also

- satisfy the PRSI contributions

For Jobseeker's Allowance you must also

- satisfy a means test
- satisfy the Habitual Residence Conditions (HRC)

Genuinely Seeking Work (JB and JA)

In order to qualify for a jobseeker's payment you must prove that you are Genuinely Seeking Work. This means that you must be able to show that you are:

- Willing to accept any reasonable offer of employment based on your skills, qualifications and experience
- Willing to accept any reasonable offer of training, re-training or education to improve your prospects of finding employment
- Able to show that you have, in the relevant period, taken reasonable steps which offer you the best prospects of getting employment. You will be expected to use all available services and supports to help you seek employment, see Chapter 3 ■, and have proof of your jobseeking efforts.

Capable of Work (JB and JA)

In order to qualify for a Jobseeker's payment you must prove that you are Capable of Work. For a day to be regarded as a day of unemployment the person claiming a Jobseeker's payment must be capable of work on that day.

A person is considered to be capable of work if there is no evidence to the contrary (e.g. unless he/she states otherwise), or where, on request, he/she fails to produce a final medical certificate from their doctor following a period of illness.

Asylum Seekers (JB and JA)

Asylum seekers do not have the right to work, and do not have entitlement to an unemployment payment, until their residency status is finalised **and** they have a valid Garda National Immigration Card. Under EU law asylum seekers have the right to apply for permission to work if no initial decision has been made on their claim for asylum within 12 months of making their claim for asylum.

Trade Disputes (JB and JA)

You cannot claim a Jobseeker's payment if you are participating in a trade dispute, or strike, at your place of work. If you are refused JB or JA you may appeal the decision to the Social Welfare Tribunal – a special office that can review the situation surrounding the trade dispute and decide if the decision is correct.

If you are involved in a trade dispute your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant may be entitled to a Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment from the Department of Social Protection for her/himself and any children you have under age 18, or between 18-22 years and in full-time education.

Working and Claiming a Jobseeker's Payment

 Please see Chapter 4 ■ for detailed information on working and claiming a Jobseeker's payment.

Even if you work only one hour in a day, that day will be considered a day of employment and you will be considered unavailable for work on that day. If you work overnight the day in which you work the most hours is considered the day of employment. The only exception to this is if you work Saturday into Sunday, or Sunday into Monday. In these cases Saturday and Monday would be counted as days of employment.

Working on Sunday

Up to the end of 2012: Sunday is not considered a day of employment, so if you work on a Sunday you will not lose a portion of your weekly Jobseeker's benefit payment for Sunday, but your income from employment on a Sunday may affect your Jobseeker's allowance payment – see Chapter 4 ■ for more information.

From January 2013: Sunday will be treated as a day of employment and taken into account when calculating the amount of Jobseeker's Benefit you will qualify for.

Jobseeker's Benefit: From the 26th July 2012, where a person in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit is working for part of a week, the payment entitlement will be based on a 5-day week rather than a 6-day week – see Chapter 4 ■ for more information.

Jobseeker's Benefit (JB)

Jobseeker's Benefit is a payment available to unemployed jobseekers who are out of work, have enough PRSI contributions (see following pages) to qualify for the payment and satisfy the 'Genuinely Seeking Work' conditions. Jobseeker's Benefit is not 'means tested', so any income you have from savings or investments or property other than your own home will not affect your payment. Jobseeker's Benefit is not paid for the first 3 days of your unemployment claim.

You may qualify for an additional payment for your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant and any dependant children under the age of 18. If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant is employed and earning between €100.01 and €310.00 per week you may receive a tapered payment for them. If they earn more than €310 you will not receive any payment for them.

Maximum Rates of Payment – Jobseeker's Benefit

Main Claimant:	€188.00
Qualified Adult:	€124.80
Each Qualified Child	€ 29.80

Jobseeker's Benefit rates are graduated on earnings in the relevant tax year. Reduced rates may be payable – see Wage Band Limits & Relevant Tax Year in this chapter ■

Duration of payment

- Jobseeker's Benefit is paid for a **maximum of 12 months** to new claimants who have at least 260 paid contributions since starting in insured employment
- Jobseeker's Benefit is paid for a **maximum of 9 months** to claimants who have less than 260 paid contributions since starting in insured employment

If you exhaust your claim for Jobseeker's Benefit, and if you do not re-qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit (see Re-qualifying for Jobseeker's Benefit in this chapter ■) and you are unemployed and 'Genuinely Seeking Work' you can apply for Jobseeker's Allowance. Jobseeker's Allowance is a means tested payment and will take into consideration both your and your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant's income, e.g. savings, investments, property other than your own home and any income from employment/self-employment either you or your partner may have – see Jobseeker's Allowance in this chapter ■ for more information.

Jobseeker's Benefit - Linking Jobseeker's Benefit Claims

A person who is employed for 4 or more consecutive days and becomes unemployed may make a repeat claim for JB when that employment ends. Where a person re-applies for JB within 26 weeks of a previous JB claim, s/he qualifies for the same rate of JB that was previously in payment subject to satisfying the conditions for receipt of the payment and subject to any change of circumstances and budgetary increases.

Example: John is made unemployed and qualifies for Jobseeker's Benefit for a maximum of 12 months on that claim. John claims Jobseeker's Benefit for 6 months; he finds a job and is made unemployed after 3 months. John signs on for Jobseeker's Benefit. Because his 'repeat' claim for Jobseeker's Benefit is within 26 weeks of 'signing-off' from his previous claim his 'repeat' claim is linked to his old claim. The rate of JB is the same rate payable as on the previous claim, subject to any budgetary increase, or changes in family circumstances (e.g. a new child dependant).

This means that John will receive Jobseeker's Benefit for the remaining 6 months of his original 12 months, subject to meeting the ongoing qualifying conditions for JB.

Periods disregarded for linking claims

Periods on any of the following activities for up to 1 year are disregarded when determining the break between 2 Jobseeker's Benefit claims. A person may have consecutive periods on different activities disregarded, once they do not spend more than one year on any one activity.

- FÁS training
- Community Employment
- VTOS

Jobseeker's Benefit – Re-qualifying for JB

If you have used up your entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit (JB), you may re-qualify by working and paying the appropriate PRSI contributions for at least 13 weeks. If you are working and getting JB, as in the case of systematic short-time workers and some part-time workers, the 13 weeks paid contributions can begin once you have claimed JB for 156 days.

You must have suffered a substantial loss of employment to re-qualify for JB, unless you are a casual worker. If you have lost your job you will have suffered a substantial loss of employment. If you are a part-time or systematic short-time worker the Department of Social Protection (DSP) will look at your pattern of employment over the last 13 weeks or another representative period to find out whether you have suffered a substantial loss of employment.

For example, if you are getting JB and working 3 days each week as a systematic short-time worker or a part-time worker and your employment pattern has not changed during the course of your JB claim, you will not have suffered a substantial loss of employment and will not re-qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit. However, if your JB claim ends and your 3 day working week is then reduced to a 2 day week, you will have suffered a substantial loss of employment and may re-qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit.

Jobseeker's Benefit – PRSI Requirements

To make a claim for Jobseeker's Benefit you must have the following PRSI contributions:

At least 104 paid contributions since you first started work, **and**

- Have 39 paid or credited in the relevant tax year (of which at least 13 must be paid ^①) **or**
- Have 26 paid contributions in the relevant tax year and 26 paid contributions in the year immediately preceding it.

i If you do not have 13 paid contributions in the relevant tax year the following years can be used to meet the condition: The two tax years before the relevant tax year; the last complete tax year; the current tax year.

Once you qualify for a payment the amount you receive will be based on your average weekly gross earnings in the relevant tax/contribution year.

If you earned a gross weekly average of €300.00 per week in the relevant tax year and you satisfy all of the conditions, you will qualify for the maximum personal rate of Jobseeker's Benefit.

Jobseeker's Benefit – Wage Band Limits

Jobseeker's Benefit rates are graduated according to earnings in the relevant tax year. A reduced rate of Jobseeker's Benefit is payable if your average weekly earnings in the Relevant Tax Year is under €300.00. To get your average weekly earnings in the relevant tax year, your gross yearly earnings are divided by the number of PRSI contributions you paid at class A, H, or P. The relevant tax year is 2 years before the year of your claim. For example, if you claim Jobseeker's Benefit in 2013 the Relevant Tax Year is 2011.

Weekly payment for new claims in 2012			
Average weekly earnings	Personal Rate	Qualified Adult	Each Child*
Less than €150	€84.50	€80.90	€29.80
€150 - €219.99	€121.40	€80.90	€29.80
€220 - €299.99	€147.30	€80.90	€29.80
€300 or more	€188.00	€124.80	€29.80

**If you do not qualify for an increase for a qualified adult you may get a half-rate qualified child increase, if your spouse or partner has income of €400 or less per week.*

If you were awarded credits only in the relevant tax year and had no earnings, you will receive the minimum rate of payment.

If you qualify for a reduced rate of Jobseeker's Benefit you can opt to do one of the following:

- Apply for optional Jobseeker's Allowance (JA), this payment is means tested so you may qualify for a higher payment.

- If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant is receiving a social welfare payment it may be better to remain as a qualified adult on their claim.

Jobseeker's Benefit – Reduction in Payment

The Social Welfare Act 2010 provides that your Jobseeker's Benefit payment can be reduced if you:

- Refuse an appropriate offer of training by an officer of the Department of Social Protection or FÁS*.
- Decline an intervention under the Employment Action Plan (EAP), do not attend EAP meetings with a FÁS officer under the EAP or drop out of the EAP process.

Penalty Rates of Payment

Personal JB rate	Reduced to
€ 84.50	€ 65.00
€121.40	€ 93.00
€147.30	€113.00
€188.00	€144.00

* Community Employment Schemes are not considered to be FÁS training opportunities

All offers of employment, training or re-training offered must be reasonable and appropriate to the individual based on their skills, abilities, education and capacity to engage in such actions as recommended by either the Department of Social Protection or FÁS.

If your Jobseeker's Benefit payment has been reduced on these grounds, and you are unhappy with the decision of the Deciding Officer you can request a review of that decision. If you are unhappy with the outcome of that review, or if a review was declined, you have the right to appeal this decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office – see Appeals later in this chapter ■ or contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Jobseeker's Benefit – Education

You will not qualify for payment of Jobseeker's Benefit while attending a course of study (including school/college holiday periods), except in such circumstances as may be prescribed. The exceptions to this disqualification for holiday periods only are:

- persons aged 21 years or over who have been in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit for at least 6 months and who are participating in approved courses of education, training or development
- mature students, i.e. persons over 23 years of age on or before 1st January in the year in which the course of study commences.

Summer Holidays: Mature students may qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit / Jobseeker's Allowance during the summer holiday periods if they satisfy the conditions for payment.

Issues that may affect your claim

Jobseeker's Benefit – Processing times for claims

Depending on a variety of circumstances, your application for Jobseeker's Benefit may take a number of weeks to be processed. While awaiting processing of your claim you may make a claim for Supplementary Welfare Allowance from the Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) in your local Health Centre. This is a means tested payment and will take into consideration you and your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant's savings, investments, property other than your own home and any income from employment/self-employment you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitants may have.

Any monies paid to you under these circumstances will be recovered from the Department of Social Protection from any arrears accrued in the processing of your Jobseeker's Benefit claim. For more information contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Jobseeker's Benefit – P45 issues

P45 not issued: If your former employer refuses to give you a P45 it can affect your application for Jobseeker's Benefit (JB). You should still apply for JB but the Department of Social Protection cannot pay JB to you until they verify your former employment. If you do not have a P45, the Department may informally contact your employer at the time of your application for JB and request him/her to send you a P45 to help process your claim for JB. If this hasn't resulted in your former employer giving you your P45, you can ask to fill in form **IA49** at your local Social Welfare Office.

Form IA49 is a declaration stating that you believe your former employer did not comply with social insurance regulations. As a result of your declaration, there will be an investigation into your employer's payment of PRSI. Filling-in form IA49 may not result in your P45, however, it may help to determine if you qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit. While awaiting a decision on your entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit you can apply for a means tested Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment from Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) in your local Health Centre. For information and assistance contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088

Period of Notice: You may be entitled to notice if you are being let go from your job. This means that you are given notice that your job will end, and a date in the near future when this will come into effect. The length of notice you are entitled to, will depend in the first place on your contract of employment and your statutory entitlement under employment law. If you are not required to work your 'notice' period but are paid for the notice period you will not be 'officially' unemployed until the date your employment is terminated according to your P45. As such you would not be able to claim a

Jobseeker's Payment, either Benefit or Allowance, until the date of termination of employment **as listed on your P45**. See Your Rights at Work in Chapter 4 ■ for details of statutory notice periods.

Jobseeker's Benefit and Europe

Living or Working in Northern Ireland

If you have been working in Northern Ireland, this is treated as working in another EU country. However, **special rules also apply** to cross-border workers who work in one EU country, and who return to their home country at least once a week. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information on cross-border workers entitlement to Jobseeker's payments.

Payment while Jobseeking Abroad

If you are receiving Jobseeker's Benefit in Ireland and wish to go to another EU country to seek employment, you can transfer your payment for a maximum of 13 weeks (78 days) to another EU country. You must be available for and genuinely seeking work in Ireland and receiving your JB payment in Ireland for a minimum of 4 weeks before you go. Ask your local Social Welfare office about transferring JB at least a month **before** you intend travelling.

Social Insurance and Work in the European Union

If you worked in another EU country in the past your social insurance record from that country may help you qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit in Ireland. However, in order to use your record from another EU country to qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit in Ireland you must have paid at least one reckonable (class A, H or P) PRSI contribution in Ireland since **last** coming to Ireland.

Jobseeker's Benefit and Self-Employment

Self-employed people would not normally qualify for a Jobseeker's Benefit payment. Paying class S PRSI as a self-employed person only covers a limited number of social insurance payments; Jobseeker's Benefit is not one of them. If, however, you were an employee before becoming self employed you may have some entitlement to a Jobseeker's Benefit payment – contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

Deregistering as Self-employed

If you have been self-employed and your business has had to close down or if the business has reduced so much that it no longer provides you with a sufficient income you may qualify for a Jobseeker's Allowance payment.

You **do not** need to de-register as self-employed to get a social welfare payment.

Jobseeker's Benefit and Redundancy

Genuinely Seeking Work

Although being made redundant would normally mean that a person would have sufficient PRSI contributions to qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit, applicants must also satisfy the Genuinely Seeking Work conditions. You are reasonably expected to be Genuinely Seeking Work immediately after your redundancy, there is no facility to take 'time out' or 'time off' from job seeking following a redundancy.

Statutory Redundancy and Jobseeker's Benefit

Where a person has been made statutorily redundant, i.e. where an employee's job no longer exists and they are not replaced having worked for the same employer for 2 years or more and receive an RP50 form, they would normally have enough PRSI contributions to qualify for a Jobseeker's Benefit payment. See Chapter 2 ■ for more information on Redundancy or contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088

Voluntary Redundancy and Jobseeker's Benefit

A voluntary redundancy situation arises when an employer requires fewer workers and asks for employees to volunteer for redundancy. An employee who takes voluntary redundancy from their job will not be disqualified from claiming Jobseeker's Benefit and will retain entitlement to their full term of Jobseeker's Benefit if they satisfy the conditions for the scheme. See Chapter 2 ■ for more information on Redundancy or contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088

Re-qualifying for Jobseeker's Benefit

If you have been made redundant, claimed Jobseeker's Benefit and exhausted your entitlement to JB, you may re-qualify for JB if you have paid 13 PRSI contributions at class A, H or P after you received at least 156 days on your JB claim and you satisfy the other conditions for Jobseeker's Benefit.

Disqualification from payment

You can be disqualified from payment for a maximum of nine weeks at the beginning of your claim for the following reasons:

- If you leave your job, including employment schemes, without just cause or a good reason.
- If you lose your job because of your own misconduct.
- If you are aged under 55 and accept a redundancy payment of over €50,000. The disqualification period can be from one week up to nine weeks, depending on the amount of redundancy you receive. Deductions may be allowed for any arrears that you have to pay on your mortgage or utilities.

If you intend to use some of the redundancy payment to clear or reduce debts, the Department may offset these debts against the amount received before deciding on any period of disqualification. Arrears of mortgage or rent, arrears

of telephone/electricity/gas bills, debts to moneylenders and other essential expenditure can be considered. The Department will verify that such bills have been paid before offsetting them against the redundancy payment received.

Not Genuinely Seeking Work (GSW)

Persons in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit are required to satisfy the 'Genuinely Seeking Work' (GSW) conditions in order to continue to qualify for the payment. People in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit can be called for interview by the Department of Social Protection to determine if they are meeting the GSW requirements in accordance with the department's guidelines. If the Department forms the opinion that you are not Genuinely Seeking Work payment can be stopped. If this happens you can seek to have the decision reviewed by the Deciding Officer, if that review is not successful you can appeal the decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office and seek a means tested Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment (SWA) while making your appeal. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for information and assistance.

Refusing an offer of Training

If you refuse an offer of training without just cause or good reason the Department of Social Protection may apply a penalty rate of payment. If this happens you can seek to have the decision reviewed by the Deciding Officer, if that review is not successful you can formally appeal the decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office and seek a means tested Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment (SWA) while making your appeal. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for information.

Moving from Jobseeker's Benefit to Jobseeker's Allowance

If you have exhausted your entitlement to a Jobseeker's Benefit payment you may be able to claim a Jobseeker's Allowance payment. Moving from Jobseeker's Benefit to Jobseeker's Allowance is **not automatic**; you must make an application for Jobseeker's Allowance with the Department of Social Protection.

The main difference between the two payments is that Jobseeker's Benefit is a non-means tested payment, but Jobseeker's Allowance is means tested. This means that your rate of payment on Jobseeker's Allowance could be affected by any savings, capital, investments or property in Ireland or abroad (other than your own home) held by you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant.

While your application for Jobseeker's Allowance is being processed you may be able to apply for a means tested Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payment for yourself and your family – See Chapter 2 ■ for more information on SWA payments or contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Jobseeker's Allowance (JA)

Jobseeker's Allowance is a payment available to unemployed jobseekers who are out of work, who do not have enough PRSI contributions to qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit and who satisfy the 'Genuinely Seeking Work' conditions. Jobseeker's Allowance is 'means tested', so any income you have from savings or investments or property other than your own home may affect your payment.

You may qualify to receive an additional payment for your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant (Qualified Adult) and any dependant children under the age of 18. If the Qualified Adult works, up to a maximum of €60 for 3 or more days work is disregarded and 60% of the balance is assessed as income and is deducted from the family rate of payment. This process is fully explained in Chapter 4 ■

Maximum Rates of Payment – Jobseeker's Allowance

Main Claimant:	€188.00
Qualified Adult:	€124.80
Each Qualified Child	€29.80

Jobseeker's Allowance may be affected by any additional income from employment, self-employment, savings, investments, pensions and property other than your own home.

Duration of payment

Jobseeker's Allowance is paid up to the age of 66 as long as you continue to satisfy the qualifying criteria – that you are fully unemployed or unemployed at least 3 out of 6 days, that you are fit, able and available for work, that you are Genuinely Seeking Work, that you are willing to accept any reasonable offer of training, re-training, education or work experience and that you continue to satisfy the means test.

Jobseeker's Allowance – under 25 years of age

There are differing rates of payments for persons claiming Jobseeker's Allowance who are under the age of 25.

Persons not affected by reduced rate of Jobseeker's Allowance if under 25

The full-rate payment of Jobseeker's Allowance will be paid to claimants under 25 who are:

- Participating in a full-time Youthreach course for early school leavers
- Participating in a full-time FÁS training course
- Who qualify for the Back to Education Allowance to pursue a full-time second level course or a Post Leaving Cert course.
- Who are transferring to Jobseeker's Allowance immediately after exhausting the Jobseeker's Benefit.
- Who are transferring directly to Jobseeker's Allowance from Disability Allowance.

The full rate of Jobseeker’s Allowance will be paid to those under 25 years of age in the following circumstances:

People who **WILL NOT** be affected by this change are:

- Those with dependent children (Qualified Child on JA payment);
- Those who qualify for Jobseeker’s Benefit or whose Jobseeker’s Benefit payment has exhausted and they are transferring from Jobseeker’s Benefit to Jobseeker’s Allowance
- Those who sign off Jobseeker’s Allowance (and the reduced rate did not apply to them) because they found work and, having lost their job, makes a repeat claim within 12 months.
- Those leaving the care of the Health Service Executive at age 18. e.g. those in foster homes or HSE care facilities or who were under HSE care within the last 12 months before they reached 18. The reduced rate does not apply for those persons aged 18-21 years. The reduced age related rate applies when they reach 22 years.

**Jobseeker’s Allowance maximum weekly rates
for people aged 25 and over**

New and Existing Claimants	Personal Rate	Increase for a Qualified Adult	Increase for a Qualified Child
Maximum Rate	€188.00	€124.80	€29.80

**Jobseeker’s Allowance maximum weekly rates
for people under 25 years of age**

New and Existing Claimants (Maximum Rate)	Personal Rate	Increase for a Qualified Adult	Increase for a Qualified Child
18-19	€100.00	€100.00	—
20-21	€100.00	€100.00	—
22-24	€144.00	€124.80	—

Issues that may affect your claim

Processing times for Jobseeker’s Allowance claims

Depending on a variety of circumstances, your application for Jobseeker’s Allowance may take a number of weeks to be processed. While awaiting processing of your claim you may be able to make a claim for Supplementary Welfare Allowance from the DSP representative, formerly known as a Community Welfare Officer, in your local Health Centre. This is a means tested payment and will take into consideration you and your spouse, civil partner or

cohabitants savings, investments, property other than your own home and any income from employment/self-employment either you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant may have.

Any monies paid to you under these circumstances will be recovered by the Department of Social Protection from any arrears accrued in the processing of your Jobseeker's Allowance claim. For more information contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Jobseeker's Allowance and Europe

Payment while Jobseeking Abroad

Unlike Jobseeker's Benefit, you cannot claim a Jobseeker's Allowance payment if you wish to go to another EU country to look for work. You must be resident in the Republic of Ireland to claim Jobseeker's Allowance.

Habitual Residence Condition

As of 1st May 2004, a person, must satisfy Habitual Residence conditions in order to qualify for Jobseeker's Allowance and Supplementary Welfare Allowance payments, regardless of your nationality. Generally an applicant who has been present in Ireland for 2 years or more, works here and has a settled intention to remain in Ireland and make it his/her permanent home may satisfy the habitual residence condition. Persons who have lived in other parts of the Common Travel Area for two years or more and then move to Ireland with the intention of settling here may satisfy the habitual residence condition.

PLEASE NOTE: Section 246 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 provides that: *"it shall be presumed, until the contrary is shown, that a person is not habitually resident in the State at the date of the making of the application concerned unless he/she has been present in the State or any other part of the Common Travel Area for a continuous period of 2 years ending on that date"*. The presumption in Section 246(1) does not mean that an applicant is automatically considered to be habitually resident in the State because he or she has been here (or in another part or the Common Travel Area) for 2 years or more.

i The onus is always on applicants to provide sufficient evidence to support their claims for a social welfare payment. Please see the HRC criteria (Part 4 Habitual Residence – National Law) on the department's website at:

www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/habres.aspx#hrlaw

Refusal of a payment on Habitual Residence conditions can be appealed to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

As of the 5th May 2005, EEA citizens and Swiss nationals who are employed or self-employed in Ireland, paying PRSI or who are claiming Jobseeker's Benefit

at the time they make a claim for One Parent Family Payment will automatically satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC).

Disqualification from payment

– Not Genuinely Seeking Work (GSW)

Persons in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance are required to satisfy the 'Genuinely Seeking Work' (GSW) conditions in order to continue to qualify for the payment. People in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance can be called for interview by the Department of Social Protection to determine if they are meeting the GSW requirements in accordance with the Department's guidelines. If the Department forms the opinion that you are not Genuinely Seeking Work your claim can be refused and payment can be stopped. If this happens you can appeal this decision and seek a Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment (SWA) while making your appeal. Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for information and assistance.

– Failure to disclose information

Persons in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance are required to advise the Department of Social Protection of any change to their circumstances, particularly those in relation to their availability for work or means i.e. savings, investments, property and partner's income. Failure to disclose such information could result in a Jobseeker's Payment being suspended or disqualified. If this happens you may be able to appeal this decision please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for further information.

– Refusing Training

If you refuse an offer of training without just cause or good reason the Department of Social Protection may apply a penalty rate to your Jobseeker's Benefit/Jobseeker's Allowance payment. If this happens you may ask for a review of this decision. Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for further information.

How to apply for Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance

When applying for a Jobseeker's payment the following checklist will help you in making your claim:

1. Apply as soon as you can when you finish work, i.e. the first day you are unemployed. The first three days of every new claim are called waiting days and you do not receive payment for these days. If you are applying for a means-tested payment you will be asked for your own and your spouse, civil partner or cohabitants recent bank statements and/or payslips and any other documentation that relates to your means.
2. You will need to bring your passport or driver's licence or proof of your identity. You may also need proof of your address if the address the Department has on its system is different to your current address e.g. a

household bill (gas, ESB etc.), bank statement or tax document.

3. Bring your P45 or a letter from your employer stating the last day you worked (See also P45 issues – Periods of Notice. This applies to both Jobseeker's Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance)
4. On the application form you will be asked about the type of work you are looking for, what times you are available for work and the efforts you have made in seeking work. Be as accurate as possible in your answers and always think through the implications of what you are saying. You must show that you are looking for full-time work and that you are willing to accept any reasonable offer of employment based on your skills, qualifications and experience. You must also show that you are willing to look at different types of work (see Genuinely Seeking Work in this Chapter ■). If you are in payment, your claim will be reviewed by the office from time to time so you should keep details of any emails or letters from employers and jobs that you have applied for.
5. While you are waiting for a decision on your Jobseeker's claim, and if your income is not enough to meet your needs, you can apply for a means tested Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment (SWA). Applications for SWA payments should be made to the DSP official formerly known as a Community Welfare Officer (CWO), at your local Health Centre.
 - If you are refused an SWA payment you should apply to the DSP official formerly known as a Community Welfare Officer (CWO), in your local health centre, for a Basic Weekly Payment. Also, under the legislation governing the scheme, the DSP official may make a single payment to meet an exceptional need to people on Social Welfare or HSE payments. This is a once-off payment to meet an unforeseen or special need that cannot be met from a person's basic income. Assistance in the form of an Urgent Needs Payment (UNP) can also be made to persons who would not normally be entitled to SWA, to assist, for example in cases of flood damage with immediate needs such as food, clothing, fuel, household goods and perhaps shelter. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for information and assistance.

Your unemployment payment can be stopped if:

- You refuse a suitable job offer, including Community Employment or a suitable offer of training, re-training or education.
- You are suspected or convicted of fraud in relation to a Social Welfare payment.

When receiving your JB/JA, there are three things to remember:

1. You must be genuinely seeking and available for full-time work and be able to provide proof of your efforts to find work. Always keep records of

your job seeking efforts. You will be asked to show proof of your efforts to find work to the Department from time to time. You should keep a scrapbook, folder or copy where you can keep records of job seeking – for example job advertisements from newspapers, lists of telephone calls you made and copies of letters or e-mails you sent to employers.

2. You must inform the Department of any change in your circumstances. They may ask you questions to make sure you are in the same circumstances as when you first signed-on. Be aware of this and be able to answer any questions they may ask you. Always make sure that you tell the Department if you do any of the following:
 - Take up paid employment of any sort.
 - Take up voluntary work.
 - Find employment on a government or approved employment programme/training scheme.
 - Claim and receive any other benefit or assistance.
 - Return to education.
 - Leave the country.
 - Have any changes in your family circumstances that may affect your payment, i.e. if a dependent child moves out of the family home or if your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant takes up employment.
 - If you are, for whatever reason, unable to take up employment.

If your circumstances change for the worse you may be entitled to some additional assistance– always check it out and ask your local Social Welfare office to review your claim.

3. If the Department overpays you in error or because of a change in your circumstances, you will be asked to repay the monies you received. You are entitled to come to an agreement with the Department as to how you should repay the money and in reaching an affordable repayment plan – however, you cannot be left with less to live on than the current rate of Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) that would apply to you and your family. If you feel that the overpayment was not due to any act or omission on your part you can ask that the amount not be recovered from you. The Department will consider your representations before making a final decision. The Department can deduct any overpayment from an existing social welfare payment, but they cannot leave you with less money than the Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate without your consent. If you are not happy with the decision to recover money from you, or the amount which is requested, you have the right to appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

Remember: It is possible to work part-time, or go back to school/college for part-time short term basic courses and continue signing-on for Jobseeker's Benefit/Jobseeker's Allowance, see Chapter 4 ■ and Chapter 6 ■.

Activation

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) has published the

- Project Plan for the Development and Implementation of the National Employment and Entitlements Service (NEES); and
- Pathways to Work Government Policy Statement on Labour Market Activation.

It is clear from these documents that the Government intends the Department of Social Protection (DSP) to more regularly engage with unemployed people and to provide supports on the basis of needs. So, if you are living in a NEES pilot area and are identified as requiring more in-depth supports, you will work with a case manager on the development of a personal progression plan. When fully established the direct responsibilities of NEES will be the provision of employment guidance, training referral and the payment of related benefits.

In the meantime a revised National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) will be used to engage with all unemployed people who have reached the three-month threshold of unemployment. The aim of NEAP is to assist unemployed people to identify a personal path to help them re-enter the labour market.

At present a group interview process is the most likely form of initial engagement and you will be contacted by the DSP advising you of a date and time for this interview. Remember, if you don't turn up for interview and you cannot give a reasonable explanation for not turning up for it, your Social Welfare payment may be affected. Also if you go to the interview but do not take up the option proposed and drop out of the process the DSP may recall you for an interview.

Through these processes an unemployed person can be offered one of four options:

- A job
- A place on a training/education scheme
- A place on an employment scheme, work experience programme, high supports process etc.
- Referral to the Local Employment Service for more intensive guidance or counselling.

Local Employment Service (LES)

- If you are having difficulty in finding work, you may be referred to the Local Employment Service for jobseeking advice and assistance.

- If you do not register with the LES, or drop out of LES mediation, the DSP will be informed. The DSP may call you for interview about your claim and your efforts to seek work.

If you experience any problems during the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) or National Employment and Entitlement Service (NEES) processes, please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for assistance.

Breaking your Claim

JB and JA – Holidays

You can receive your Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance payment for 2 weeks holidays (i.e. 12 days excluding Sundays) in any calendar year. These holidays may be taken abroad. You are required to inform the Local Social Welfare Office 2 weeks in advance of your departure and you must complete the **UP30 form**. All holiday payments will be made retrospectively, upon confirmation of the position when the person signs on again (on the next normal signing day after his/her return). If you take holidays for more than 2 weeks, you will only be paid in respect of the first two weeks of your holiday, you will not be paid for any other additional period you are on holiday.

JB and JA – FastTrack Signing off for up to 4 weeks

If you have been offered full time employment, or work for 4 days or more, for up to 4 weeks you will not qualify for Jobseeker's payment. However the Department of Social Protection operates a fast-tracking system for customers who sign off to take up work for a short period of up to 4 weeks. This ensures that payment is re-instated without delay. In effect this means that after your employment is finished you can sign-on to your claim without the need to go through the process as a new claimant. It is important that you inform the local Social Welfare Office in advance that you are taking up work. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

JB – Training Courses and Education

If you are in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit and you take up an approved course of training or education, your 'claim' will be frozen at the point you enter the course. You will be able to claim the remaining period of entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit, subject to satisfying the qualifying criteria, after the course is over. There are conditions/qualification on this if the course is longer than one year.

For example, if you were in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit for 6 months and qualified for an approved course of training or education your claim for Jobseeker's Benefit would stop when you start the course. When you finish the course, you can continue your claim for Jobseeker's Benefit for the remaining 6 months of the maximum 12 months if you satisfy the conditions of the scheme.

Collecting your payment

All new applications for Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance are paid through the Post Office. The payment is made using your Social Services

‘swipe’ card. You will be required to sign a receipt acknowledging you have received the payment and that you still meet the terms and conditions of that payment.

You must bring valid photographic identification with you to collect your payment. Staff working in the Post Office may ask to see your photo ID before giving you your payment.

The following is considered as valid photographic identification (photo ID): Driving licence, Passport, GNIB card (Garda National Immigration Bureau). EU/EEA nationals may use a National Identity Card.

As a general rule, the option of having your JA/JB payment paid into your bank account after six months is **no longer** available. However, a payment can only be changed from a post office payment to a bank account if there are particular circumstances preventing you from collecting your payments in the post office. This change is at the discretion of your local Social Welfare office.

What to do if your payment is stopped

On occasion Jobseeker’s payments, or other Social Welfare payments, may be stopped at the point of payment in the post office, without receipt of prior notice. If this happens you should:

- Confirm with the person in the post office that the payment has been officially stopped. Please note, the post office staff will not be able to make any other payment to you or provide any additional information about why your claim was stopped.
- Contact the relevant section in the Department of Social Protection on 1890 66 22 44 to enquire why your payment has been stopped, ask if any letters informing you of the stoppage of payment were sent out to you and, if you did not receive such letter/notice, ask for a decision or reason in writing to be sent to you immediately. Depending on the reason given, you may need to seek to have a decision reviewed or to lodge an appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office – see Social Welfare Appeals at the end of this chapter ■.
- If there is a delay in resolving the issue you can apply to the DSP official formerly known as a Community Welfare Officer (CWO), in the local Health Centre for an Exceptional or Urgent Needs payment (these are means tested) while you are attempting to resolve the issue. If it appears that the matter may take more than a week to resolve you may need to apply for a regular weekly Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payment from the DSP official.
- Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for information and assistance if your payment has been stopped or if you are having difficulties accessing a Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payment.

Overpayment and Appeals

Overpayments

If you claim, or are paid, a social welfare payment that you were not entitled to, you may be asked to repay the money that you have received. You will be advised if an overpayment has been assessed against you and how the Department of Social Protection (DSP) propose to recover the money from you.

If you accept responsibility for repaying the money you can suggest the amount which you think you can afford. You may wish to seek information and support from MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service) in relation to any negotiations with the DSP in repaying any monies. The Department will consider your representations before making a final decision.

The amount of any overpayment which is to be repaid by a person to the Department in relation to any Social Welfare claim may be reduced or cancelled where the overpayment arose because of:

- a failure by the Department to act within a reasonable period on information which was provided by or on behalf of the person concerned, or
- an error by the Department,

and the person concerned could not reasonably have been expected to be aware that a failure or error had occurred. This is now legislated for, see <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2011/en.si.2011.0461.pdf>

The Department can deduct any overpayment from an existing social welfare payment but cannot, without your written consent, leave you with less money than the Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate applicable to your circumstances.

If you are not happy with the decision to recover money from you, or the amount which is requested, you have the right to appeal to seek a review of the original decision or make a formal appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

Offsetting Overpayments

Normally, the amount of any overpayment assessed against you may be reduced, or offset, if you had an underlying entitlement to any other Social Welfare payment during the time the overpayment occurred.

This reduction, or offsetting, will not occur if the Department of Social Protection believe that the overpayment occurred because you deliberately provided false, inaccurate or misleading information in a deliberate attempt to make a fraudulent claim.

You have the right to appeal any decision by the Department where it refuses to reduce or offset any arrears, where you had an underlying entitlement to another Social Welfare payment, because the Deciding Officer had formed the opinion that the overpayment occurred because of a fraudulent claim. For more information please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Repayment and Prosecution

Where a determination has been made, by the Department, that an overpayment has occurred because of fraud, the Department retains the right to pursue legal action against the claimant.

Even if an agreement has been made to repay any monies owed, and the person has adhered to this agreement without fault, the Department retains the right to pursue legal action independent of any repayment agreement, and to seek to prosecute a fraudulent claim as an offence through the courts where a conviction could result in a fine and/or custodial sentence.

If this occurs you may need to seek legal advice or representation. Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

The Appeals System

The people who make decisions about your claim at the Department of Social Protection (DSP) are known as 'Deciding Officers'. If you are unhappy with a decision made on your claim, you have a number of options in seeking to address and resolve the problem or issue.

Asking for a Review of a Decision

You have the right to ask the Deciding Officer to review their original decision, and receive a fair and unbiased review, if:

- You have new or additional information which was not available to you or the Deciding Officer at the time of the original decision, which if it had been available at the time of the original decision you feel may have resulted in a different decision.
- The stated interpretation of the facts or information you provided which are contained in the Deciding Officers decision are 'subjectively' incorrect and need clarification
- The decision of the Deciding Officer is factually incorrect or inaccurate based on matter of fact.

The Deciding Officers must adhere to Departmental guidelines and to legislation when making a decision on your claim. They must also act in a manner which applies due process, natural justice and fair procedure in reviewing the original decision. Copies of the Department's guidelines are available on the Department's website (www.welfare.ie) in the Freedom of Information section. Where appropriate, you should always ask the original Deciding Officer to review their decision before making an official appeal to the Appeals Office.

If the review process is unsuccessful you may wish to consider making a formal appeal.

Note: If your Social Welfare payment has been stopped or suspended by a Deciding Officer and you have requested a review of their original decision, you may be entitled to claim a Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payment from the DSP official formerly known as a Community Welfare Officer (CWO) in your local Health Centre.

The type of payment and amount you receive will depend on your individual circumstances. You may qualify for a weekly means tested payment to support you and your family and/or continued support of payment for Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement.

If you are refused assistance by means of a weekly payment or payment towards your Rent or Mortgage you may seek a review of the decision or appeal the decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. You should ask the DSP official for a copy of any decision, in writing, which sets out the grounds for the refusal of your payment under the SWA regulations. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for further information.

Social Welfare Appeals

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is an office of the Department which functions independently of the Minister and the Department in arriving at its decisions. It was established to provide an appeals service to persons who are unhappy with decisions of:

- Deciding Officers of the Department of Social Protection on questions relating to entitlement to social welfare payments and insurability of employment under the Social Welfare Acts,
and
- Department of Social Protection representatives, formerly known as Community Welfare Officers (CWO) on questions relating to entitlement to certain Supplementary Welfare Allowance payments.

The Office is headed by a Chief Appeals Officer and has its own Appeals Officers. An Appeals Officer is independent of the Department and will look at your claim to make sure that the decision has been made in a reasonable way and in accordance with the legislation. Appeals Officers can determine if your application for a payment, or any decision received, is appropriate, adheres to and is in keeping with the Department's guidelines and legislation. Appeals Officers must decide cases in accordance with the social welfare legislation, as applied to the facts before them in each individual case. Appeals Officers are not bound by guidelines drawn up by the Department for its Deciding Officers/Department of Social Protection representatives.

Payment while Appealing a Decision

If you have lodged an appeal and you are waiting on a hearing, or a decision, from the Social Welfare Appeals Office you may be entitled to claim a Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payment from the DSP official formerly known as a Community Welfare Officers (CWO) in your local Health Centre.

The type of payment and amount you receive will depend on your individual circumstances. You may qualify for a weekly means tested payment to support you and your family and/or continued support of payment for Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement.

If you are refused assistance by means of a weekly payment or payment towards your Rent or Mortgage you are entitled to seek a review of the decision or take an appeal against the refusal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. You should ask the DSP official for a copy of any decision, in writing, which sets out the grounds for the refusal of your payment under the SWA regulations. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for further information.

How to make an Appeal

You should complete both sides of the appeal form and include a request to have an oral hearing. Although an oral hearing may be requested it is up to the Appeals Officer to decide whether to grant such a request as Appeals Officers may make a decision on your claim based on the documentary evidence on the file. Appeals forms are available from your local Social Welfare office or can be downloaded from the website of the Appeals Office, www.socialwelfareappeals.ie and should be returned to:

Chief Appeals Officer, Social Welfare Appeals Office, D'Olier House, D'Olier Street, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 671 8633.

Practical Steps in making your Appeal

If possible, contact the INOU for assistance **before** you lodge your appeal.

- Appeal within 21 days of receiving the Deciding Officer's decision.
- You can ask for your appeal to be held as an oral hearing, this is done by simply writing 'I wish to have my appeal held as an oral hearing'
- When going to an oral hearing, you can bring a friend or advice worker to provide support or help you present your case. You do not have to have a solicitor to represent you, but can if you wish. Your local Resource Centre may be able to make the appeal on your behalf.
- Collect all evidence supporting your appeal and bring witnesses who can provide evidence.
- You should always keep copies of all the correspondence you have had with the Department and the Appeals Office – especially the original appeals form (both sides of it).
- You should request a copy of your Social Welfare file, and all the documentation relating to your case, from the Social Welfare Office that dealt with your claim. Ask for this in writing under the Freedom of Information Act when making the request. You are legally entitled to any information the Department has used in deciding your case.
- You should meet with your representative/advisor regularly to review and update your case. Write down everything that appears relevant. Get as much supporting evidence or material as possible – the more prepared you are for the appeal the better chance you have of winning it.
- You should normally hear the result of your appeal within 6 weeks of the hearing, although this could take longer depending on the number of appeals being dealt with by the Appeals Office.

- If new evidence becomes available after the appeal, you can ask for the case to be reviewed.
- If you lose your appeal you can still apply for the same payment in the future if your circumstances have changed since the appeal decision.
- If the appeal is unsuccessful you may ask the Chief Appeals Officer to review the case if you feel the Appeals Officer has made an error with regard to the law or the facts. Any request for a review should be in writing and should specify in what way you feel the Appeals Officer has erred in law or fact.
- If your request for a review to the Chief Appeals Officers is unsuccessful, or if any review carried out by the Chief Appeals Officer is unsuccessful you may be able to write to the Ombudsman.

Please Note: You will not be able to take-up a place on a CE scheme, Community Services Programme, Back to Education Allowance or other schemes while your claim is under appeal.

Making a Complaint

Your Right to Complain

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the service provided to you as a customer of the Department of Social Protection, or the manner or fashion in which you have been dealt with or treated you have the right to make a complaint about this to the Department of Social Protection.

The complaints process should not be used to address issues which would normally be dealt with by the Appeals Process (see previous pages) this includes rates of payment, qualification criteria, means testing or other similar issues not directly related to Customer Services.

How to Complain?

Firstly, make the complaint. You can do this in person at your local Social Welfare Office, by telephone Lo- Call 1890 662244 or through their website www.welfare.ie. It is, however, recommended that you seek assistance and support from your local Citizens Information Centre www.citizensinformation.ie or the INOU www.inou.ie telephone (01) 856 0088 in making your complaint.

If you are submitting your complaint in writing you should keep copies of all documentation submitted to the Department and send your complaint by registered post, to ensure traceable delivery and receipt of your complaint. Your complaint should be addressed to the manager or supervisor of the office / section concerned as the manager/supervisor is responsible for all issues concerning his/her office and they will be the person charged to investigate your complaint.

The Department of Social Protection will seek to resolve your complaint as soon as possible.

If you are still not satisfied with the response, you can have your complaint referred to the Local Manager/Section Manager/Officer specifically designated to handle complaints.

Information You Should Provide When Making a Complaint

The following will speed up the handling of your complaint:

- Your name, Address and Personal Public Service Number (PPS No) - this used to be the old RSI Number
- State the nature of your Complaint i.e. what happened, when it happened, etc.
- State the Name of the Office and of the Staff Members Names (if known) you were dealing with
- Your daytime/mobile telephone number (if you have one), if you would like to be contacted by phone – this could speed up dealing with your complaint and/or your contact e-mail address.
- If the complaint is complicated, you might prefer to put it in writing - this will ensure that all details are given.
- Your local Citizens Information Centre www.citizensinformation.ie or the INOU www.inou.ie can assist you in compiling your complaint.

Dealing with Your Complaint

The Department of Social Protection will aim in all cases to resolve the complaint immediately. However, if this is not possible in your case the Department will:

- record the details of the complaint and acknowledge that they have received it
- give you a contact name and telephone number
- where they are at fault, apologise and correct the error as soon as possible
- explain why, if your complaint cannot be resolved for any reason beyond our control
- review the complaint and consider whether they can learn from what has happened or try to ensure it does not happen again

If you are still not satisfied...

If you feel that you have been unfairly treated or are not satisfied with a decision on your complaint, it is open to you to contact the Office of the Ombudsman. By law the Ombudsman can investigate complaints about any of Department of Social Protection administrative actions or procedures as well as delays or inaction in your dealings with the Department.

The Ombudsman provides an impartial, independent and free dispute resolution service. **Office of the Ombudsman**, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2. Telephone (01) 639 5600 Lo-Call 1890 22 30 30 Fax: (01) 639 5674 Website:

www.ombudsman.ie E-mail: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie Your local Citizens Information Centre www.citizensinformation.ie or the INOU can assist you in preparing your case for the Ombudsmans Office.

Cohabitation

What is Cohabitation

The term 'cohabitant' is defined in the social welfare code in accordance with Section 172 (1) of the Civil Partnership and Certain Rights and Obligations of Cohabitants Act, 2010

"For the purposes of this Part, a cohabitant is one of 2 adults (whether of the same or the opposite sex) who live together as a couple in an intimate and committed relationship and who are not related to each other within the prohibited degrees of relationship or married to each other or civil partners of each other."

If you are assessed as being a member of a cohabiting couple your Social Welfare payment may be affected.

- Your payment could be suspended pending further investigation
- Your payment/claim could be stopped/refused
- The Department of Social Protection could assess an overpayment against you and seek repayment of any monies they believe were paid to you incorrectly while you were cohabiting.

If your payment/claim is stopped or refused on the grounds of cohabitation, or if an overpayment has been assessed against you, you have the right to Appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Grounds for assessing Cohabitation

Each case is evaluated individually on its own merits. The question of whether a couple are cohabiting as husband and wife, or civil partners, is determined using the Social Welfare legislation and the Departments Operational Guidelines. It includes the consideration of the following factors:

– The basis on which the couple live together:

The fact that the couple reside in a common residence is insufficient by itself to determine that they are living together as husband and wife or civil partners. There also needs to be consideration if they constitute a single household.

– The degree of financial dependence in respect of their finances:

Evidence of a common household fund is an indication of living together as husband and wife or civil partners. Joint bank accounts used for household expenses would be strong evidence of such a relationship.

– The degree and nature of any financial arrangements:

- Who owns property? Was it purchased jointly/ registered in joint names?
- Are both parties named as mortgage holders?

- **Whether there are one or more dependent children:**
 - Is there a commitment to raise (their) children together?
- **Whether one of the adults cares for /supports the children of the other:**
 - How are the children cared for?
 - Who attends school/medical/dental appointments with the children?
 - Are baby-sitting responsibilities shared?
- **The degree to which they present themselves to others as a couple:**
 - Do the couple socialise together?
 - Are they known locally as a couple?
 - Did they apply as a couple for a tenancy/mortgage?
 - Do they use a common surname?
 - Do they take holidays together?

It is not necessary that all the above elements be present before cohabitation is established **but some of the elements must be established**. It would be necessary to establish co-residence – that the couple actually or normally reside at the same address – and that some of the other elements are also present.

Proof of sexual relations is not an essential element of cohabitation between a couple. However, if such relations are admitted this can be seen as strong evidence of cohabitation. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Civil Partnerships

For the purposes of most social welfare claims (for example, Jobseeker's Allowance and Supplementary Welfare Allowance claims) cohabiting couples, people in civil partnerships and married couples are treated the same.

Tax and Social Welfare

Many Social Welfare payments are now treated as taxable income. This means that your Social Welfare payment will 'use up' your available tax credits.

Any additional income that you or your spouse may have, on top of your Social Welfare payment, will be subject to tax. Jobseeker's Allowance, Maternity Benefit and Child Benefit are not treated as taxable income.

The main social welfare payments that ARE taxable are:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| • Jobseeker's Benefit | • One Parent Family Payment |
| • Illness Benefit | • Invalidity Pension |
| • Blind Pension | • Deserted Wife's Benefit |
| • State Pension Contributory/ Non-Contributory | • State Pension (Transition) |
| • Guardian's Payment Contributory/ Non-Contributory | • Carer's Allowance |
| • Widow / Widowers Contributory/Non-Contributory | • Injury Benefit |

If you are claiming a taxable social welfare payment you must notify Revenue of any additional income either you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant have from earnings or other sources. See Chapter 5 ■ for more information.

CHAPTER 2

Coping with Poverty

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Coping with Poverty

The INOU is constantly campaigning for much needed improvements in the social welfare system and for real 'cost of living' payments for all welfare recipients. In the meantime, we realise that it is important for people to get as much help, information and support as possible.

In this chapter we explain a range of supports available, how to access them and how to get the most benefit from them.

Community Welfare Service

From 1st October 2011 the Community Welfare Service and the Community Welfare Officers providing it, formally transferred to the Department of Social Protection. The service and the staff are now part of the Department of Social Protection. The following schemes are administered by these staff.

- Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance
- Rent Supplement
- Exceptional Needs Payments
- Mortgage Interest Supplement
- Urgent Needs Payments

Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme (SWA)

The SWA scheme provides short-term payments to tide people over in emergencies and times of difficulty or when on-going needs cannot be met by main social welfare payments.

Payments under this scheme are administered by Department of Social Protection's Representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer). This official makes a decision based on the circumstances of each individual case, using guidelines that interpret the legislation.

Who is eligible for Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA)?

Any person resident in the state whose means do not meet her/his needs, and the needs of any child dependant or qualified adult, is entitled to apply for a Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment. But, the following groups are **not** normally entitled to a basic weekly payment:

- Full-time students (but students studying under an approved educational scheme can apply) see Chapter 6 ■.
- Full-time workers, unless employment is under 30 hours per week.
- People involved in trade disputes.
- People who do not satisfy conditions of habitual residency of the state.
- People in prison.

In the case of the above exclusions, individuals may apply for Exceptional Needs Payments (ENP's) and in some instances may apply for Urgent Needs Payments (UNP's).

In order to get a payment you must:

- Satisfy a means test
- Satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC)
- Have applied for all possible benefits or assistance from either the Department of Social Protection or other appropriate state agency.
- Satisfy the DSP Representative that you need the particular payment.

The method of assessing capital for entitlement to Supplementary Welfare Allowance payments is as follows:

Capital	Weekly Means Assessed
First €5,000	Nil
Next €10,000	€1.00 per €1,000
Next €25,000	€2.00 per €1,000
Balance	€4.00 per €1,000

Refused an SWA Payment

If you did not qualify for a Social Welfare payment because you have failed to provide information or material requested, you may be refused an SWA payment.

If you are refused an SWA payment you are entitled to receive the decision for the refusal in writing on the grounds that you may wish to appeal that decision – see SWA Appeals later in this chapter ■.

EU workers may be able to claim a basic SWA payment, and access Rent Supplement and other SWA payments, if they

- Have been genuinely employed in Ireland, and have lost their job, and
- Meet the other relevant qualifying conditions for SWA
- For more information see HRC and EEA/EU workers on www.welfare.ie

Types of Payments

Basic Weekly Payment

You can claim this payment if you can prove that your income is less than the SWA rate appropriate for your family size, and can satisfy the means test. The SWA rate of payment is €186.00 for the claimant, €124.80 for the Qualified Adult and €29.80 for each Qualified Child (formerly Child Dependant).

Persons aged 18 – 19 years, and without children receive €100 for the claimant, and €100 for Qualified Adult (this applies to new and existing claimants, however exceptions do apply for some existing claimants); new claimants aged 20 - 21, and without children, receive €100 as the personal rate and €100 for the Qualified Adult; and the rate for those aged 22 - 24 is

€144.00 for the claimant, €124.80 for the Qualified Adult.

You will only be paid the difference between your income and the appropriate rate of SWA for your family size.

If you are under 25 years, and living with your parents, their income may be assessed as means against you when processing your application (evidence of parents' income may be required)

Weekly Supplements

The guidelines provide for payment of ongoing weekly supplements in different situations. The Department of Social Protection (DSP) may pay a weekly supplement to a person who does not have enough money to meet her/his needs. contact the INOU for assistance on (01) 856 0088.

Rent Supplement

People receiving Social Welfare payments and living in private rented accommodation may be eligible to receive financial assistance towards the cost of their rent under the SWA Rent Supplement scheme.

Rent Supplement is normally calculated to ensure that a person, after the payment of rent, has an income equal to the rate of SWA appropriate to their family circumstances less a minimum contribution, currently €30 for single people or €35 for couples, which recipients are required to pay from their own resources.

NB: Because the personal rate of SWA is €186 and Jobseeker's Benefit and Allowance, OPFP etc is €188, recipients of these payments will have their rent supplements reduced by a further €2

Many recipients pay more than €30 or €35 because they are required, subject to income disregards, to contribute any assessable means that they have over and above the appropriate basic SWA rate towards their accommodation costs

- The minimum contribution that individuals and families make towards their rent is €30 for a single person and €35 for a couple.
- Before you apply for rent supplement you need to have been assessed by your local authority as having a housing need, unless one of the following exceptions applies:
 - You do not require an assessment if you have been in private rented accommodation for 6 out of the last 12 months, provided that you were able to afford your rent from your own funds at the start of your tenancy.
 - You do not require an assessment if you have been in homeless accommodation, in prison or in hospital for 6 out of the last 12 months.

- Rent Supplement will not be paid where an applicant has refused a second offer of local authority housing, or has left such housing without reasonable cause.

Central Rent Units

If you are applying for a Rent Supplement your area may be covered by one of the new Central Rent Units. If you are not covered by one of these units, you should contact the Department of Social Protection's Representative, (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) at your local health centre.

If you live in one of the areas covered by the new Central Rent Units you can get a 'rent pack' from your local health centre. This pack contains detailed information (including a list of documentation you will need) and all the relevant application forms. You should read the information in the pack carefully.

If you are satisfied that you have all the necessary documents ready you can forward your application to the relevant Rent Unit. The processing of your application may be delayed if you do not supply all the information requested in the pack.

The Unit will contact you if they need any further information. If they do not need any more information they will tell you when your application will be processed. If you require assistance in making an application, contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Landlord Registered for Tax

From 1st January 2011, a new condition was introduced whereby Rent Supplement is not payable in respect of a tenancy where the landlord:

- has not provided the Department's Representative with a Tax Reference Number (normally their PPS number), or
- has not advised the Department's Representative that she/he has no Tax Reference Number and has not notified the Department's Representative the reasons why she/he has no Tax Reference Number

Rent and Mortgage Interest Supplement Means Scheme

Taking up part-time employment can effect your Rent/Mortgage supplement. Income is assessed in the following way:

- The first €75 of 'additional household income' is disregarded.
- Additional household income over €75 is disregarded at 25% of its value
- There is no *upper limit* on the amount that can be disregarded

Additional Household Income

When calculating entitlement to a Rent Supplement and Mortgage Interest Supplement 'additional household income' is money that comes from:

- Part-time employment or part-time self-employment (under 30 hours per week)

- Full-time employment or full-time self-employment (30 hours or over per week). This rule **ONLY APPLIES** where a Local Authority accepts a person as in need of accommodation under the Rental Accommodation Scheme. This applies to Rent Supplement claims only.

PLEASE NOTE: Different rules apply where a person is **officially on** the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) with a Local Authority and paying differential rent.

- Any employment or scheme i.e. CE, BTWA, BTWEA or FÁS course
- Family Income Supplement (FIS)
- Maintenance Payments of over €95.23. Payments in excess of €170.23 (€95.23 max maintenance limit + €75 'additional household income') are assessed as 'additional household income', with the amount over €170.23 disregarded at 25% of its value.

Where assessable 'additional household income' is over €75, the amount over the €75 will be disregarded at 25% of its value:

Example: Additional Household Income = €125

Step 1: First €75 disregarded = balance €50
(€125 minus €75 = €50)

Step 2: Amount over €75 disregarded at 25% of its value
(€50 x 25%) = €12.50. Total disregard: €87.50

Rent Supplement reduced by €37.50

Note: Remember that certain types of 'additional income' can affect your basic Social Welfare payment.

Example 1:

Single person on Jobseeker's Allowance (€188.00) with no other income

Single Rate Jobseeker's Allowance	€188.00
Basic SWA rate for a single person	- €186.00
Additional income above Basic SWA rate	€2.00
Private Rented Accommodation per week	€105.00
Minus minimum personal contribution (person pays)	- €30.00
Maximum Rent Supplement payable per week (DSP)	€75.00
Minus additional income above Basic SWA rate	- €2.00
Rent Allowance payable (DSP)	€73.00

Example 2: Single person on Jobseeker's Allowance working part-time (under 30 hours) with €150 additional household income

Private Rented Accommodation per week	€105.00
---------------------------------------	---------

Minus minimum personal contribution	(person pays)	- €30.00
Maximum Rent Supplement payable per week	(DSP)	€75.00
Standard Jobseeker's Payment		€188.00
Earnings from Employment over 3 days		€150.00
Revised Jobseeker's payment based on assessment of earnings*		€132.00
*(see Chapter 4 ■ for Jobseeker's Allowance and assessment of additional income)		
New Total Income (Jobseeker's Allowance and income from work)		€282.00
Additional Household Income above SWA rate	(SWA rate €186.00)	€96.00
Automatic €75 disregard on additional income		- €75.00
Disregard of 25% the remaining amount	(€21 - 25%)	- €5.25
Total Disregard	(€75 + €5.25)	€80.25
Amount Assessed against Rent Supplement	(€96.00 - €80.25)	€15.75
Rent Supplement payable	(€75.00 - €15.75)	€59.25

Allowed Expenses

When calculating a person's additional household income, PRSI and reasonable travelling expenses can be disregarded. In addition, certain lunch, travel allowances or childcare allowances paid to participants may also be disregarded. Income Tax **will not** be disregarded.

Non-dependent household members – Rent Supplement and Mortgage Interest Supplement

Non-dependent household members, i.e. children or other family members, receiving a social welfare payment in their own right, must contribute €30 towards the rent or mortgage interest supplement (Unless they have already been subjected to the Benefit and Privilege assessment).

Where non-dependent household members are working, their assessable income (i.e. gross, less PRSI and travel to work expenses) is divided by the appropriate rate of SWA (€186 for a single person) which is then multiplied by €30 to establish their liability.

Example:

John is living in the family home and his parents receive a Rent Supplement/Mortgage Interest Supplement. John earns €600 a week. He has a monthly bus pass, costing €100.

Step 1: €600

Deductions: Travel = €25

PRSI = €19

Assessable Income: €556

Assessable Income Valuation: €556 divided by €186 = €2.99

€2.99 x €30 = €89.70

Final Deduction: €89.70

Maintenance Payments

If your only additional income is a maintenance payment, the first €95.23 per week of that maintenance payment is counted in full as means when calculating entitlement to Rent Supplement. Any maintenance payments in excess of €170.23 (€95.23 max maintenance limit + €75 'additional household income') will be assessed as 'additional household income', with the amount over €170.23 disregarded at 25% of its value.

Rehabilitative Earnings Disregards

If you are in receipt of a Disability Allowance payment and have permission to engage in rehabilitative employment, up to €120 of earnings from that rehabilitative employment can be disregarded when assessing income which could affect payment of Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement. This disregard cannot be applied with 'the additional income disregard' as described on previous pages. Only one such disregard can be applied, whichever is most beneficial.

Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB)

If you are in receipt of Illness Benefit (IB) or Invalidity Pension (IP) you can take up employment under the new Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB). The PCB allows you to return to work. See Chapter 4 ■ for more information.

Important: Rent Supplement and Mortgage Interest Supplement recipients who avail of the Partial Capacity Benefit may retain entitlement while engaged in part-time employment. Rent Supplement recipients who engage in full-time employment may retain entitlement only where a Local Authority accepts the person as in need of accommodation under the Rental Accommodation Scheme.

The following example illustrates how Rent Supplement is affected by income from employment while in receipt of a Partial Capacity Benefit.

Example 1: Single person on IP/IB (€188.00) with additional income

Calculate Income

Partial Capacity Benefit (Moderate 50%)	€ 94.00
Income from Employment (24 hours @ week Min Wage)	<u>+€ 207.60</u>
New Total Income	€301.60
Calculate Extra Income	
New Total Income	€301.60
Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) rate	<u>- €188.00</u>
Extra Income	€115.60

Calculate Rent Supplement payable

Private Rented Accommodation per week	€105.00
Minus minimum personal contribution (person pays)	<u>- €30.00</u>
Maximum Rent Supplement payable per week	€75.00*

(*before disregards applied see step 1 and step 2 below)

Disregard – Step 1 (first €75)

Extra Income	€115.60
(minus) €75 disregard	- €75.00
Remainder	€40.60

Disregard – Step 2 (25% of balance)

Remainder	€40.60
(minus) 25% of Remainder =	- €10.15
Final additional assessable income	€30.45
Calculate Rent Supplement payable	
Maximum Rent Supplement payable per week	€75.00
(minus) Final Assessable Income	- €30.45
Final Rent Supplement payable	€44.55

Returning to Full-Time employment

Persons accepted as being in need of accommodation under the Rental Accommodation Scheme may continue to receive a Rent Supplement and return to full-time employment subject to satisfying a means test. To qualify the person must not have been in full-time employment (i.e. 30 hours or more per week) in the previous 12-month period immediately before seeking to retain their Rent Supplement.

Where a person has participated in Community Employment (CE) or the Back To Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme (BTWEA) they will be eligible to retain their Rent Supplement if returning to full-time work – subject to qualifying for the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).

A person who is not entitled to retain Rent Supplement on taking up full-employment may continue to receive payment of Rent Supplement for a period of up to 30 days after starting work or until such time as he or she first receives remuneration, whichever is the earlier – (section 5 SWA Rent Supplement Operational Guidelines on www.welfare.ie.)

Rent Supplements will not be paid when:

One member of a household is working full-time (i.e. if one of a couple is working 30 hours or more). In such case both partners will be excluded from receiving a rent supplement. This does not apply where the claimant has been accepted as 'in need of accommodation' by a Local Authority under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) and their spouse is not in full-time employment.

Renting from a parent: You cannot get Rent Supplement to help you pay rent to your parent if you are living in the family home. If your parent owns a second property, you will generally not get Rent Supplement to rent this property from them unless it is a *bona fide* tenancy and you are assessed as

having a housing need. Your parent must also be able to prove that they have a history of renting this property.

Rent Supplements levels:

When assessing applications for Rent Supplement, a DSP Representative will use guidelines on what is considered reasonable accommodation for individual or household needs. Rent supplements are subject to a limit on the amount of rent that an applicant for rent supplement may incur. The limits vary according to geographic location and household size.

The rent supplement will only cover rent up to the amount set out in the regulations. If your rent is above the maximum 'cap' or limit for your family size the DSP can refuse to pay any rent supplement.

A DSP Representative can ask you to move to cheaper rented accommodation if they think your accommodation is too expensive. It is essential that you keep the DSP Representative informed of any change in your circumstances. Maximum rent limits for each county can be found at the back of this book, but please note that local limits below these levels may apply. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for details of maximum rent limits in your area.

Asked to reduce your rent: The maximum rent limits were reduced in January 2012. These new limits apply to new claims and also to claims which are under review. If your rent is above the new limits, you will be asked to approach your landlord to have your rent reduced. If the landlord will not reduce your rent you should contact your local rents unit to discuss your options. You may be asked to move to cheaper accommodation. If you believe your rent is above market rates you can submit a complaint to the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) who have the power to order your landlord to reduce the rent. Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for further information or assistance.

Mortgage Interest Supplement

The purpose of Mortgage Interest Supplement is to provide short-term support to eligible people who are unable to meet their mortgage interest repayments in respect of a house, which is their sole place of residence. The supplement assists with the interest portion of the mortgage repayments only and is payable if the loan agreement was entered into at a time when, in the opinion of the Department of Social Protection (DSP), the person was in a position to meet the repayments.

Applications for Mortgage Interest Supplement received on or after 18th June 2012

From 18th June 2012, Mortgage Interest Supplement will not be paid until the applicant has entered into and complied with an alternative repayment arrangement with their mortgage provider for a period of 12 months prior to a claim for Mortgage Interest Supplement – see page 54.

Existing Recipients of Mortgage Interest Supplement

Qualifying for Mortgage Interest Supplement (MIS)

To qualify for Mortgage Interest Supplement you must meet the following conditions:

- You must satisfy the means test
- You must have been able to afford the repayments when your loan agreement was first agreed
- The amount of your mortgage interest payable is not more than what the Department considers reasonable to meet your residential and other needs
- Only the portion of your loan that relates to the essential purchase, repair or maintenance of your home is taken into account
- The size of the arrears are not greater than what the Department considers reasonable
- You are habitually resident in this State

Means test for Mortgage Interest Supplement

When you apply for Mortgage Interest Supplement your means will be assessed. This will show how much of the mortgage interest you are able to pay. A means test examines all your sources of income. However, some income is not taken into account in the calculation of your means. You may qualify for Mortgage Interest Supplement if your income is below a certain amount and you meet the other conditions.

Where a person has additional income in excess of the standard weekly rate of Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA), the first €75 of such additional income, together with 25% of any additional income over €75, is disregarded for means assessment purposes. Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for further information on the means test.

Your contribution to mortgage interest (Household Contribution)

You must pay at least €30 towards your mortgage interest. You may pay more than €30 because you must also contribute any means you have towards your mortgage interest. If you are one of a couple and are claiming Mortgage Interest Supplement you must pay at least €35 towards your mortgage interest.

Education and Mortgage Interest Supplement

You will not qualify for Mortgage Interest Supplement if you are attending full-time education. However, if you are getting Mortgage Interest Supplement and qualify for the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA), you will keep an entitlement to Mortgage Interest Supplement. You will be means-tested and if you changed from a reduced social welfare payment to the standard BTEA rate it will affect the amount of supplement you get.

Employment and Mortgage Interest Supplement

If you are engaged in part-time employment (less than 30 hours a week)

and/or training opportunities you can continue to receive mortgage interest supplement subject to their satisfying the standard means assessment rules.

You will not qualify for Mortgage Interest Supplement if you are in full-time employment. That is, employment for 30 hours per week or more. (In the case of couples, if one of a couple is in full time employment, both are excluded from claiming Mortgage Interest Supplement).

However, there are special retention arrangements that may allow you to keep a proportion of your Mortgage Interest Supplement. For example, if you are participating in a Community Employment Scheme or getting a Back to Work Enterprise Allowance you may retain your Mortgage Interest Supplement if your gross household income does not exceed €317.43 per week.

Income from the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA), Family Income Supplement (FIS), PRSI, reasonable travel expenses and any childcare allowance payable on certain FÁS training courses is not taken into account in the assessment of your gross household income.

Under these special retention arrangements you will continue to get 75% of your Mortgage Interest Supplement rate during your first year in employment, 50% in the second year and 25% in the third and fourth year. After the fourth year you will no longer be entitled to Mortgage Interest Supplement if you are in employment.

These retention arrangements also apply to people who have been unemployed for 12 months or more and who return to full-time employment and sign off their social welfare payment. In these cases gross household income must not exceed €317.43 per week.

Household Charge Waiver

People getting Mortgage Interest Supplement may qualify for a waiver from the €100 Household Charge. To be eligible for the waiver you must be getting MIS on the liability date, which is 1 January each year.

New Applicants – on or after 18th June 2012

From 18 June 2012 Mortgage Interest Supplement will not be paid until you have entered into and complied with an alternative repayment arrangement, under the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP), with your mortgage provider for a period of 12 months prior to your claim.

This new rule applies to applications for Mortgage Interest Supplement received by the Department of Social Protection on or **after 18 June 2012** – even if the person had previously received this payment.

Mortgage Interest Supplement may be available after you have availed of an alternative repayment arrangement for 12 months from your lender. You must then also satisfy all other conditions of the scheme to qualify for payment. The 12 month period begins from the month you entered into the alternative repayment arrangement with your lender, not from the date of your initial

'contact' with the lender. You should ask your lender to provide documentary evidence confirming that the 12 months rule has been satisfied. If you do not engage with your lender then Mortgage Interest Supplement will not be payable.

If you are having difficulty meeting your repayments to your mortgage you should contact Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) on (0761) 072 000. Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for further information on the means test.

Heating Supplement and Diet Supplement

Both of these types of payments may be paid to people who, due to ill health or a particular medical condition, require a special diet or a well-heated house. Again you will have to show that your income does not allow you to meet these special needs. In the case of the Diet Supplement, you will also need a letter from your dietician and consultant saying that you need a particular diet e.g. gluten free. The DSP Representatives have guidelines to decide how much the extra dietary needs or heating will cost and how much help/assistance you should get.

There are now only four main categories for which supplements are paid:

Type A: low lactose, milk free diet

Type B: gluten free diet

Type C: high protein, high calorie diet

Type D: altered consistency (liquidised) diet

Exceptional Needs Payments (ENPs)

The Department of Social Protection's Representatives (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) have the power to make once-off payments to meet exceptional or out of the ordinary needs. Examples would be assistance towards the cost of funerals, maternity items or buying/repairing essential household items such as a cooker or washing machine. If you have a once-off expense, which you are unable to pay, you should apply for this payment. The decision to award an ENP is at the discretion of the Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) and is based on the individual circumstances of each case. Give the DSP Representative as much information as you can in order to see if the payment can be made. If you require assistance in making an application contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Urgent Needs Payments (UNPs)

Anyone may qualify for a special payment to meet an urgent need, for example, arising from a fire or flood. However, there is no automatic entitlement to such payments. UNPs are payable at the discretion of the Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) taking into account the requirements of the legislation and all the relevant circumstances of the case.

Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance Scheme

This payment is designed to help meet the costs of school uniforms.

Applications can be made from 1st June to 30th September and anyone claiming a social welfare (including Family Income Supplement – FIS), HSE payment or on an approved employment scheme should apply.

The means test is based on gross income, less PRSI and reasonable travel expenses and is as follows:

Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance Income Limits

Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	4 Children
Couple*	€563.60	€593.40	€623.20	€653.00*
	*Each extra child €29.80			
Lone Parent**	€410.10	€439.90	€469.70	€499.50**
	**Each extra child €29.80			

The allowance paid for each eligible child aged 4-11 on or before 30 September 2012 is €150. The allowance paid for each eligible child aged 12-22 on or before 30 September 2012 is €250.

Applying for a Supplementary Welfare Allowance Payment

General SWA Payments: You can make an application for any of the above Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payments through the Department of Social Protection's Representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) at your local health centre.

Rent Supplement: To apply for Rent Supplement you should contact the Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) at your local health centre. In some areas new Rent Supplement applications are being taken by centralised Rent Units.

If you live in one of these areas you do not need to be assessed locally. You can get a rent pack from your local health centre. This pack contains detailed information (including a list of documentation you will need) and all the relevant application forms. You should read the information in the pack carefully. If you are satisfied that you have all the necessary documents ready you can forward your application to the relevant Rent Unit.

The processing of your application may be delayed if you do not supply all the information requested in the pack. The Unit will contact you if they need any further information. If they do not need any more information they will tell you when your application will be processed. For more information contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Basic Weekly SWA payments

The Social Welfare Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2003 allows DSP Representatives working as part of the Community Welfare Service of the Department of Social Protection to determine if a person is Genuinely Seeking Work, where that person would normally be expected to apply for a Jobseeker's payment. If you have applied for a Jobseeker's

Allowance/Benefit payment or are appealing the refusal of a JA/JB payment, DSP Representatives now have the authority to seek proof of your efforts in 'Genuinely Seeking Work' (see Chapter 1 ■) when assessing your entitlement to a basic weekly SWA payment. If they decide that you are not Genuinely Seeking Work they could refuse your application for an SWA payment.

Your local Department of Social Protection (DSP) office or Health Centre can provide official application forms to make applications for Basic Weekly SWA payments and Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement. Remember to keep a copy of your original application if possible.

This application will give you the opportunity to explain all the reasons why you need help at that particular time; it will help you to explain your case to the DSP Representative. You will need to bring the following items when making your application:

- Proof of where you live and proof of identity.
- Relevant letters from doctors, community workers, social workers, etc. as appropriate.
- If you are looking for Rent Supplement bring your rent book or rent receipts.
- If you are applying for Diet Supplement bring letters from your dietician and consultant.
- Official written quotes from shops or repair-shops if seeking help with essential household goods.

You will be means-tested and decisions normally take about a week. The quicker you can give the DSP Representative the information needed to make the means test, the quicker s/he can process your claim.

If you are refused payment, you are entitled to be told the reason for refusal in writing. Always keep a copy of this document in case you want to appeal the DSP Representatives decision. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

SWA Appeals

In the past Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payments were administered by Community Welfare Officers of the Health Service Executive (HSE). These payments, and the officials, have transferred to the Department of Social Protection.

If an SWA payment has been refused you have the right to appeal that decision. Before making a formal appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office, you can make a request for a 'review' to the DSP Representative who made the original decision asking for it to be reviewed. If this is not successful, you can make a further request for a review to their superior, usually at Assistant Principal (AP) level in the Department of Social Protection.

If this is not successful you can make a formal appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

At each stage you should appeal a decision as soon as possible after the initial decision has been made.

Deciding Officer – DSP Representative in Community Welfare Service

- Check to make sure the DSP Representative had all the relevant information available to them at the time they made their decision and provide any new information as may be relevant.
- Ask if the DSP Representative could review the existing information in light of any further clarification or any new information or evidence. Ask the DSP Representative to reverse the original decision.
- Ask the DSP Representative exactly why the payment is being refused and request the decision in writing on the grounds that you may wish to appeal.

Assistant Principal (AP) – Community Welfare Service

- Contact the Assistant Principal (AP) explaining your case and ask them to review the original decision of the Deciding Officer – DSP Representative
- Provide any additional supporting information as may be appropriate.

Social Welfare Appeals Office

If you are unhappy with the result of this process you may then appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office (see Chapter 1 ■). Remember that:

- You should appeal within 21 days of receiving the decision.
- You can ask for your appeal to be held as an oral hearing, this is done by simply writing 'I wish to have my appeal held as an oral hearing'
- When going to an oral hearing, you can bring a friend or advice worker to provide support or help you present your case. You do not have to have a solicitor to represent you, but can if you wish. Please contact the INOU for more information on (01) 856 0088.



You cannot take a further appeal to Social Welfare Appeals for Exceptional Needs Payments or Urgent Needs Payments.

Appeals Processing Times

Processing times for appeals can vary depending on the nature and detail of the issue under appeal. Standard Social Welfare Appeals, without an oral hearing, can be completed in a number of weeks. Where an oral hearing is granted, this can take several weeks or months longer.

Payment Pending Appeal

Where a person is appealing a refusal of a weekly SWA payment, it may be possible to apply for an 'interim' SWA weekly payment from the Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) pending the outcome of the original appeal. This may also include the continued payment of any Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement. Please contact the INOU for more information on (01) 856 0088.

Medical Cards

Medical Cards entitle people on low incomes to free medical care and a range of medical services. They are issued by local HSEs and are subject to passing a means test. All medical card holders have to pay a charge of 50c per item dispensed by pharmacists. There are no exceptions to this charge.

If you are solely dependent on social welfare payments you will usually pass the means test for the medical card. Medical Cards can be issued on hardship grounds even if a person's income exceeds the income guidelines.

Each application is considered on its own merits, so if your income is more than the guidelines and you have specific hardship circumstances, you should still apply giving as much detail and evidence of your circumstances as possible. The means test guidelines, still under review, based on gross income less PRSI, are as follows:

Medical Card Income Guidelines:

Single person under 66 living alone	€184.00
Single person under 66 living with family	€164.00
Couple under 66 (+ Lone Parent)	€266.50
Couple 66 - 69*	€298.00
+ each child under 16	€38.00 (1st and 2nd) €41.00 (3rd +)
+ each dependant child over 16	€39.00 (1st and 2nd) €42.50 (3rd +)
+ over 16 in full-time third level (not grant aided)	€78.00

Reasonable expenses incurred in respect of childcare costs and rent / mortgage payments will also be allowed. Weekly travel to work costs are also allowed.

*All persons over 70 are entitled to a medical card **subject to** a means test. This does not cover their dependants.

If you are unemployed for 12 months or more you may keep your Medical Card for up to 3 years, in certain circumstances, when you get a job (see Chapter 4 ■).

- Income from Family Income Supplement (FIS) is not counted when working out if you are within the income guidelines.
- If you live in the Republic of Ireland and work in Northern Ireland, you are entitled to a medical card regardless of your income.

- If you are under 25 and living at home with your parents, you will normally not receive a medical card unless your parents have one.

GP Visit Medical Cards

In extending the provision of the medical card scheme a 'Doctor Visit only' medical card was introduced. This card entitles you to free visits to your doctor, but you may still have to pay for medication.

GP Visit Cards Income guidelines:

Single person under 66 living alone	€276.00
Single person under 66 living with family	€246.00
Couple under 66 (+ Lone Parent)	€400.00
Couple 66-69 (+ Lone Parent)	€447.00
+ each child under 16	€57.00 (1st & 2nd) €61.50 (3rd +)
+ each dependant child over 16	€58.50 (1st & 2nd) €64.00 (3rd +)
+ over 16 in full time third level (not grant aided)	€117.00

Reasonable expenses incurred in respect of childcare costs and rent/mortgage payments will also be allowed.

Managing Your Money

When you have a limited income it is important that you know how to check on where your money is going and what to do if you are having trouble paying back debts.

Getting Help

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a free and confidential service for people with debt and money management problems. There are 53 MABS services in Ireland, staffed by trained Money Advisers. Money Advisers will:

- Help you deal with your debts and make out a budget.
- Examine your income to ensure you are not missing out on your entitlements
- Contact/liase with your creditors with offers of payment on your behalf.
- Help you decide on the best way to make the payments.

You can contact the MABS Helpline, on **076 107 2000** Monday to Friday, 9.00 am – 8.00 pm. Visit their website www.mabs.ie for more information.

Some Personal Budget Tips

- Start by doing your budget weekly and then do it monthly.
- Get all members of the family involved.
- Work out how much you spend weekly on gas, electricity, rent etc.

- Work out how much money you will need to put aside to meet future expenses, e.g. communion, confirmation, holidays or car insurance.
- Don't forget to include items such as clothing, childcare, household items, medical expenses, sports, gifts, etc.
- Try to put some money aside every week or every month, even if it is only a very small amount.
- When buying things on credit or borrowing money don't be tempted to sign any contracts until you have read them fully and thought them over carefully.

Debt Management

- Debt only becomes a problem when you can no longer continue to repay a loan or pay the bills – when you are no longer in control. There are ways out of debt.
- Check if you are getting all your entitlements or if there is any way you can increase your income.
- Check if you can increase your income by cutting back on spending.
- List all your debts in order of importance. If you are in danger of losing your home because of rent/mortgage arrears that debt should be your first priority.
- If in difficulty, contact your creditors as soon as possible. Begin with the most important debts. You can explain your situation and prevent any action being taken against you.
- Where possible use the services of an advice/support worker when trying to work out a repayment agreement with a creditor.

In dealing with electricity or gas bills the local energy supplier should work with the customer to come to a realistic repayment method.

Losing your Job

The shock of losing a job, or the prospect of reduced hours/pay, can be acute and traumatic for people. It is very important that they understand options that may be offered and how those options will affect them.

Changes to Working Conditions

If your employer is proposing any change to your terms and conditions of employment, such as Reduced Hours or Pay, Short-time or Lay off, you should ask your employer to give you written details of this proposed change and ask for a review date. If you accept the change, you should reply in writing, confirming that your acceptance is on the basis that this is a temporary situation and that you will be returning to your original hours/pay in the future.

Reduced Hours or Pay

A reduced working hours situation occurs where your employer proposes a reduction to your pay or hours, but that reduction is not less than half the normal weekly amount of your normal pay/hours. This is a change to your terms and conditions of employment and **must be agreed with you**.

If you do not agree, and say you wish to continue working as before your employer could decide to make you redundant. If this happens you may bring a claim for Unfair Dismissal.

Short-time

A short-time situation occurs when there is a reduction in the amount of work available, and applies where the reduction to your pay or hours is less than half the normal weekly amount of your normal pay/hours. Short-time is a change to your terms and conditions of employment and **must be agreed with you**. This must be a temporary situation and your employer must notify you before the reduction in hours/pay starts.

Lay off

A lay-off situation arises where your employer is temporarily unable to provide work for you. Your employer can lay you off if it is in your contract of employment or it is custom and practice in your workplace. Lay-off is a change to your terms and conditions of employment and **must be agreed with you**, unless it is a term of the contract or if it is custom and practice in the industry. This must be a temporary situation and your employer must notify you before the reduction in hours/pay starts.

Both Short-Time and Lay off

If you do not agree to Short-time or Lay off your employer could seek to make you redundant.

If a short-time or lay-off situation exists and has continued for 4 weeks or more, or for 6 weeks in the last 13 weeks, and your employer cannot guarantee you at least 13 weeks employment you may be able to claim redundancy. This is considered voluntary redundancy and you are not entitled to notice or pay in lieu of notice. You will need to complete the RP9 form to claim redundancy in this situation.

There is no limit on the number of times an employer may put an employee on short-time or lay-off, as long as the employer can guarantee at least 13 weeks employment. However, if it becomes apparent that the short-time or lay-off is no longer temporary then the situation could be considered a redundancy. For more information on this subject contact the INOU by telephone on (01) 856 0088

Entitlement to a Jobseeker's payment

If your hours of work are reduced so that you are unemployed for at least 3

out of 6 consecutive days you may be entitled to a Jobseeker's payment from the Department of Social Protection.

Working on Sunday

Up to the end of 2012: Sunday is not considered a day of employment, so if you work on a Sunday you will not lose a portion of your weekly Jobseekers payment for this day, but your income from employment may affect your Jobseeker's Allowance payment –see Chapter 4 ■■ for more information.

From January 2013: Sunday will be treated as a day of employment and taken into account when calculating the amount of Jobseeker's Benefit you qualify for.

Jobseekers Benefit: From 26th July 2012, where a person in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit is working for part of a week, the payment entitlement will be based on a 5-day week rather than a 6-day week – see Chapter 4 ■■ for more information

To qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit you must have enough PRSI contributions and must have suffered a substantial loss of employment in any period of 6 consecutive days. This means, you must have lost at least one day's employment and as a result of this loss be unemployed for at least 3 days out of 6 days. Your earnings must also have been reduced because of the loss of employment.

If your employer reduces your days at work to 3 days a week or less and you do not qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit you may get Jobseeker's Allowance for the other days. You must meet the other conditions that apply to Jobseeker's Allowance, for example, you must satisfy a means test.

It may be possible to get Family Income Supplement if you have dependant children and your pay or hours are reduced. You cannot receive Family Income Supplement (FIS) and a Jobseeker's payment for the same period.

Entitlement to Redundancy

- Employed – for 104 weeks continuously
- Employees who have more than 104 weeks continuous service are entitled to a Statutory Redundancy payment by law.

Employed – for less than 104 weeks continuously

- Employees who have less than 104 weeks continuous service are not entitled to a Statutory Redundancy payment.

Redundancy

Under the Redundancy Payments Act of 1967-1991 employers must, by law, pay compensation to employees dismissed for reasons of redundancy. The

amount of the statutory payment is related to the employee's length of service, normal weekly or monthly earnings (including basic salary, regular overtime, payment-in-kind) up to a weekly maximum of €600 per week.

Redundancy Applies when:

- An employer ceases to carry on business.
- An employer's requirements for employees has ceased or diminished.
- An employer has decided to carry on the business with fewer or no staff. In this case, close members of the employer's family are not taken into account.
- An employer has decided the work is to be done in a different manner in future and the employee is not sufficiently qualified or trained to do the work in the required manner.

Qualifying for a Redundancy Payment

Not all employees are entitled to the statutory redundancy payment, even where a redundancy situation exists. To be eligible for a payment under the Redundancy Acts, the employee must satisfy the following requirements:

- Be aged over 16 years of age.
- Be in employment that is insurable for all benefits under the social welfare system (PRSI Class "A").
- Have worked continuously for the employer for at least 104 weeks.
- Have been in continuous employment for more than two years if a Part-time worker.
- The same rules apply to apprentices. Apprentices qualify for redundancy unless let go within one month of completing an apprenticeship.

Employers must give proper written notice of redundancy of at least two weeks, the minimum period, to both the employee and to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. During this period, an employee should be given reasonable time-off to look for other work.

The amount paid in redundancy relates to the employee's length of continuous service and weekly earnings up to a maximum of €600 per week.

How are Redundancy payments calculated?

Under the Redundancy Payments Act 1967-2007, employees are entitled to:

- Two weeks pay for each year of employment.
- A bonus week's pay.
- The payment is normally calculated on earnings at the time of the redundancy*

Example:

You are aged 45 and are being made redundant. You have worked for your employer for ten complete years. Your statutory redundancy payment will be calculated as follows:

— Two week's pay x 10	20 weeks
— Plus one week's bonus pay	<u>+ 1 week</u>
Total Statutory Entitlement	21 weeks pay

* If you were made redundant within a year of being put on reduced hours or pay, your redundancy payment would be based on your earnings for a full week. If you are made redundant after working reduced hours for more than a year, how your payment will be calculated depends on whether you accepted being on reduced hours or not. If you fully accepted the reduced working hours as your normal week and never asked to return to full-time work, then your redundancy payment will be based on your gross pay for the reduced working hours. If, on the other hand, you never accepted the reduced working hours as your normal hours and continually asked to be put back on full-time working, your payment would be based on your normal weekly earnings.

The employer must pay the lump-sum directly to the employee. Any lump-sum payable does not depend on the redundancy payment rebate that the employer is expecting to receive from the Department of Social Protection.

Redundancy Payments and Tax

The basic statutory redundancy payment is not subject to tax. Any amount over the basic statutory redundancy payment may be subject to tax (subject to the following exemptions)

Basic Exemption

There is a basic exemption of €10,160, plus €765 for each complete year of service.

Example:

Joe is 45 and is being made redundant. He has worked for the employer for 12 years. His redundancy payment is €27,000:

Total Redundancy Payment:	€27,000
Statutory Entitlement	
— Two week's pay X 12 years	24 weeks
— Plus one week's bonus pay	+ 1 week
Total Statutory Entitlement	25 weeks pay
Total Statutory Amount (25 weeks x €600) Tax Free	€15,000

Additional Payment

Ex-gratia/extra payment	€22,000
— Basic Exemption	€10,160
— Basic Exemption (at €765 for each years service x 12)	<u>+€9,180</u>
Total Basic Exemption	<u>€19,340</u>
*Amount liable for tax (€22,000 - €19,340)	€2,660

*As Joe has been working for 12 years, he will probably also qualify for the Increased Exemption – as explained below. So more than likely Joe will not pay any tax on his total Redundancy payment.

Basic Exemption plus Increased Exemption

An additional €10,000, called the Increased Exemption, is also available in the following certain circumstances:

- If you have not received a tax-free lump sum in the last 10 years
- If you have never received a tax-free lump sum and you are not getting a lump sum pension payment

For further information in relation to taxation of Redundancy Payments please contact the Central Telephone Information Office of the Revenue Commissioners at 1890 60 50 90 or the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Employer Unable to pay Redundancy

If your employer has not paid your redundancy lump sum, you should apply to your employer for it using form **RP77** (available from Workplace Relations Customer Services – www.workplacerelements.ie). If your employer still refuses to pay it, you can apply to the Department of Social Protection for direct payment from the Social Insurance Fund. You apply online using form **RP50**. Once you have submitted your claim online you must print off the **RP50** form. This form must be signed by both employee and employer or employer representative in black ink:

- If your employer is unable to pay your redundancy lump sum, they should sign the RP50 and submit a letter from an accountant or solicitor stating they are unable to pay and accepting liability for the 85% (since 1 January 2012) owing to the Social Insurance Fund together with documentary evidence such as audited accounts.
- If your employer refuses to pay your redundancy lump sum or if there is a dispute about redundancy you can bring a claim to the Employment Appeals Tribunal using the new single complaint form available from the new Workplace Relations Service – www.workplacerelements.ie. This must be done within one year of your dismissal. To apply for your lump sum you should send a completed form **RP50** together with a favourable decision from the Employment Appeals Tribunal

Voluntary Redundancy

Voluntary Redundancy occurs when an employer, faced with a situation where s/he requires a smaller workforce, asks for volunteers for redundancy. The people who then volunteer for redundancy are, if they fulfil the normal conditions, eligible for statutory redundancy. There must be a genuine redundancy situation in the first place. Persons who take a voluntary redundancy are entitled to claim Jobseekers Benefit, and cannot be disqualified from seeking to claim Jobseekers Benefit because they volunteered for redundancy.

Very often voluntary redundancy offers can include an additional, or ex-gratia, payment on top of your statutory redundancy payment. If you have been offered voluntary redundancy and refuse to accept it, you may be made compulsory redundant at a later stage. If this occurs you may only have entitlement to receive the statutory redundancy payment, without any additional or ex-gratia payment that may have been paid to those who accepted voluntary redundancy.

Voluntary Severance

Voluntary Severance occurs when an employer asks for staff to voluntarily depart from or leave the employment of a company. It can be a financial incentive offered by an employer to employees where a business is downsizing or restructuring.

A voluntary severance **does not** constitute a redundancy. This means that the job the person accepting the voluntary severance carried out may continue to exist even after they have left the company.

A 'voluntary severance payment' is any payment in connection with a mutually agreed and voluntary departure from employment by an employee.

Accepting a voluntary severance does not prevent the employee from being rehired to do the same job under different working conditions, terms or rates of pay. However, forcing an employee to accept a voluntary severance in order to re-hire them under less favourable circumstances could constitute Constructive Dismissal and could be the subject of a complaint to the Employment Appeals Tribunal – www.workplacerelations.ie.

— Tax:

Unlike redundancy payments, voluntary severance payments are not tax-free payments and are subject to normal tax assessment.

— Jobseeker's payments:

You will not automatically qualify for a Jobseeker's Benefit / Jobseeker's Allowance payment if you accept voluntary severance. This is because you will have in effect 'voluntarily' made yourself unemployed. This could result in disqualification of payment of a Jobseekers payment for up to 9 weeks. If

applied, this disqualification period will be deducted from your overall 12 or 9 month entitlement to receive Jobseeker's Benefit.

Any monies received from a voluntary severance will be assessed as 'means' for the purpose of the means test for qualification for Jobseeker's Allowance.

— Other Supports:

Unlike a redundancy situation, you will not have immediate access to the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance or the Back to Education Allowance as would be the case in a redundancy situation. If you qualify for Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance after a voluntary severance you may be able to access the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance or the Back To Education Allowance under the standard qualifying conditions.

Employers Rebate

Employers who pay the statutory redundancy entitlement and give proper notice of redundancy (at least 2 weeks) are entitled to a rebate from the Social Insurance Fund. The employer rebate of statutory redundancy payments made to employees on or after 1 January 2012 is 15%. To make a claim for this rebate employers submit form RP50 to the Redundancy Payments Section of the Department of Social Protection within 6 months of the date of termination of employment. Once the RP50 claim form has been submitted online you must print off the RP50 form. This form must be signed by both employee and employer or employer representative in black ink.

NOTE: Employees who are made redundant do not have to wait for their employer to receive this rebate in order to receive any part of their statutory redundancy payment.

Insolvency Payments Scheme

The Insolvency Payments Scheme is a scheme to protect pay-related entitlements of employees whose employer has become legally insolvent.

Insolvency occurs when a business is in liquidation, receivership, where the employer is legally bankrupt, where the employer has died and the estate is being administered under the relevant legislation or where employer is insolvent under the legislation of another EU Member State.

Under the Scheme, employees may claim arrears of pay, holiday pay, pay in lieu of statutory notice and various other entitlements that may be owed to them by their employer.

Employees should claim from the employer representative (usually the liquidator or receiver) for payment of outstanding entitlements. The employer representative can claim an insolvency payment online. Disputes regarding most entitlements under the Acts may be referred to the Employment Appeals Tribunal. You can apply using the complaint form T1-C available online through the www.workplacerelations.ie website.

Redundancy Forms

RP50 Form

In a redundancy situation the employer should give the employee a Redundancy RP50 Form on the date of payment. This form should show the basis on which the sum was calculated. A copy of the form containing an original signature of both employee and employer in black ink, should also be sent to the Department of Social Protection.

When calculating any entitlement to a redundancy payment your continuity of employment is an important consideration. As previously stated, an employee must have worked continuously for an employer for at least 104 weeks to be considered in continuous employment.

If you have been absent from employment under the following conditions it will not be considered a break in the continuity of your employment:

- Sick leave for 26 weeks or less, occupational injury for 52 weeks or less, maternity leave for 26 weeks or less and career breaks of 13 weeks or less.
- Maternity/adoptive/parental or carer's leave.
- Dismissed due to redundancy before reaching 104 weeks service then taken back by employer within 26 weeks of that dismissal.
- Re-employed within four weeks of dismissal by an associate company of previous employer.
- Voluntarily transferred to another employer and it is agreed that the continuity of service will not be broken.
- Placed back in employment under the Unfair Dismissal legislation.
- Lay-offs, strikes or lock out of your employment.
- A transfer of the business to a new owner.

When the actual dismissal takes place the employee must be given the RP50 form. In the event that an employer refuses or fails to pay an entitled employee the statutory redundancy payment and all reasonable courses of action have been exhausted, he/she can apply to the Department of Social Protection for payment. The Department pays the full amount direct to the employee from the Social Insurance Fund (S.I.F.).

RP9 Form

The RP9 Form is used where a short-time or lay-off situation has arisen. The Employer fills out section A of the form to notify an employee of a temporary short-time or lay-off. Part B is filled out by the Employee notifying the Employer of their intention to claim redundancy based on their short-time or lay-off situation.

Employment Rights

Two statutorily independent bodies will replace the current five bodies dealing

with Employment Rights issues. The new Workplace Relations Services will take on the functions of the Labour Relations Commission, the National Employment Rights Authority, the Equality Tribunal and the first instance functions of the Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT). The Labour Court will become the single appeal body for all workplace relations appeals including those currently heard by the Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT).

The WorkPlace Relations Service will provide information on employment rights and employers obligations under employment, equality, equal status and industrial relations legislation and sets out the resolution and redress options available where disputes or potential contraventions arise. The Workplace Relation Service can be contacted on LoCall – 1890 80 80 90 or through their website at www.workplacerelations.ie.

Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT)

Disputes concerning redundancy payments can be submitted to the Employment Appeals Tribunal (lo-call 1890 220 222), which has the advantage of providing a speedy, fair, inexpensive and informal means for individuals to seek remedies for alleged infringements of their statutory redundancy rights. The Tribunal also deals with disputes under such other labour law areas as the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts, 1973 to 1991.

These cover the right of workers to a minimum period of notice before dismissal, provided they are in continuous service with the same employer for at least 13 weeks and are normally expected to work at least 8 hours per week.

The Tribunal also deals with the Unfair Dismissals Acts, 1977 to 1993 and the Protection of Employees (Employers' Insolvency) Acts, 1984 to 1991 (dealing with such areas, amongst others, as arrears of pay due to an employee, holiday and sick pay etc.) where the employer is insolvent.

CHAPTER 3 Looking for Work

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Introduction

In this chapter we explore the range of services and supports available to help you find a job and assist you in your move from Welfare to Work.

Very often unemployed people find that knowing how to look for work is as important as the act of looking for work itself. Knowing where to source information on employment opportunities and how to follow up on them is equally important.

You will find that as you begin to understand how to use the range of 'job-seeking' tools and services available you will greatly increase your chances of finding and getting the job you want.

FÁS/Department of Social Protection

The Department of Social Protection will deliver a new integrated service for jobseekers following a merger with the Employment Services and Employment Programmes (formerly administered by FÁS).

This new **National Employment and Entitlements Service** will ensure that all employment and benefit support services will be integrated in a single delivery unit managed by the Department of Social Protection.

This integrated service will provide a 'one stop shop' for people seeking to establish their benefit entitlements; looking for a job; and seeking advice about their training options. This service will offer users a higher level of personalised employment advice, with more frequent face-to-face interviews.

SOLAS

A new training authority called SOLAS (Seirbhísí Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) is to be established, to replace the training element of FÁS. Participants on current FÁS and further education courses will not be affected by the establishment of SOLAS and will continue their courses under the new authority. Until this change all training/courses will continue to be called FÁS training courses.

Help with getting a job

Find your local services

In response to the need for information and supports by jobseekers the INOU has developed a new 'Find Your Local Services' facility on its website.

This easy to use interactive services map allows users to locate a wide range of key services available both locally and nationally.

The directory helps jobseekers by showing the exact location of hundreds of services along with contact details, opening hours and information on the services provided by the organisation or agency.

The service providers included in the directory are:

- Social Welfare Offices
- FÁS offices
- Local Employment Services
- Jobs Clubs
- Citizens Information Centres (CIC's)
- Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS)
- Free Legal Aid Advice Centres (FLAC)
- Local Development Companies,
- Family Resource Centres
- Congress Network Centres
- County / City Enterprise Boards

Employment Support Services

Employment Support Services supports access to the labour market for jobseekers at local, regional and national level and assists employers who are seeking to fill job vacancies.

The service is delivered by the National Employment and Entitlements Service (NEES) which operates nationally through 63 Employment Service offices and Local Employment Service offices (LES) which operate in 24 designated areas of disadvantage and provides a fully integrated nationwide range of services and supports.

The services and supports available for jobseekers include:

- Guidance interviews to discuss employment opportunities, training courses, financial supports and other options which may lead to employment.
- Information provision on the complete range of training programmes available for jobseeker's and advice on labour market opportunities and services available.
- Help with identifying transferable skills which may be used in various occupational settings.
- A Jobseeker Pack which provides information on using the job search facility on the Jobs Ireland web site, information on how to: fill out an application form, prepare a CV and covering letter, prepare for job interviews and a list of useful websites.
- Jobseekers may also input their CVs directly onto the Jobs Ireland database allowing employers to access these CVs with a view to contacting the Jobseekers directly regarding job vacancies.
- There are a number of programmes such as the Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) which assists jobseekers who have difficulty obtaining / maintaining employment.

- International Employment Services run a series of National & Regional Jobs Fairs providing access to employers both from Ireland and the EU/EEA, access to training and employment programmes, and information on issues regarding taxation, welfare, education and other activation measures.

You can locate your nearest Employment Support Services office through the 'Find Your Local Services' map on the INOU website: www.inou.ie

Jobs Ireland (National Contact Centre)

Jobs Ireland (www.jobsireland.ie) is an online marketplace where Jobseekers and Employers can find information and profiles about prospective jobs, JobBridge internship opportunities, WPP opportunities and CE vacancies and staff in Ireland and across Europe. Jobs Ireland also provides a database of Training courses to suit all needs.

Jobs Ireland can be accessed easily and in a number of ways – through the Internet (Jobseeker and Employer), at special touch screen (WATIS) kiosks in FÁS offices nationwide, using the downloadable 'smartphone' jobseekers app or through the Jobs Ireland free phone service (1800 611 116).

The Jobs Ireland NCC service allows registered Job Seekers/Job Changers to call and get up-to-date advice on current job vacancies, career and/or course information. Visit the Career Directions website: www.jobsireland.ie.

Local Resource Centres

Local Resource Centres are independent organisations offering a range of services and supports to help unemployed people find work.

These centres can help you by providing free and confidential 'Welfare to Work' and welfare rights information. They can provide assistance in preparing your C.V. and cover letters, as well as filling in application forms. In addition they may be able to provide information on local job vacancies, access to the FÁS website and daily newspapers.

A number of Centres run Jobs Clubs which provide a range of tailored resources and supports designed to help people find work. For more information see details on Jobs Clubs in this chapter.

Career Directions

Career Directions is an integrated and interactive web-based application incorporating a career interest assessment tool together with a careers database of 700+ career profiles. The career assessment tool allows users to match their own interests and qualifications to suitable careers, it assists users in identifying career preferences based on likes and dislikes and presents them with a range of suitable potential careers (on a best matched basis).

You can view up-to-date Labour Market Information (LMI) for careers and there is a link in the career profiles to search for any relevant vacancies on the FÁS Jobs Ireland site. In addition, you can link directly into the FÁS website to search for relevant FÁS courses and there is a link in the career profiles to Qualifax, Ireland's National Learners' database, which allows you to search their course database also. Visit the Career Directions website: www.careerdirections.ie

Jobs Clubs

Jobs Clubs are available as a support to job seekers who require some assistance in preparing their CV's, improving their interview skills or in identifying possible job opportunities. Part-time job seeking / interview skills and the support of experienced staff are available on a structured basis for a period of up to 5 weeks. Thereafter, participants can avail of the facilities of the Jobs Club until such time as they find a suitable job. Jobs Club participants retain their Social Welfare entitlements and receive an additional bonus while on the formal Jobs Club modules.

● Formal Training

These courses can range from three to five weeks in length depending on the needs of the group. They run on a part-time basis from 9.00am - 1.00pm three to five days per week. Each course covers a range of areas including: C.V. preparation, Writing Cover letters, Completing Application Forms, finding and following Job Leads, Telephone Skills, Interview Preparation and Interview Skills.

● Resource Centre

In addition to the Formal Training available the Jobs Club will provide you with a range of long-term support services and facilities to help you look for work. These include: typing cover letters, updating and amending C.V.'s and assisting with photocopying/faxing and postage.

● Sourcing Jobs

The Jobs Club will help you to build up a good knowledge of how and where to find jobs. Through its extensive contacts with FÁS and other organisations it will match you with existing job vacancies and be aware of potential vacancies in the future. For more information on Jobs Clubs please contact your local FÁS Employment Services Officer.

You can locate your nearest Jobs Club through the 'Find Your Local Services' map on the INOU website: www.inou.ie

The Local Employment Service (LES)

The overall aim of the service is to enable you to explore the range of education, training and employment options available and to plan your use of these options to help you progress from welfare to work.

Through the LES you can access the services of mediators and guidance counsellors who are available to assist you in accessing the jobseeking services and supports you need.

The mediator will work with you in developing your C.V. and jobseeking skills. They will develop a jobseeking plan that will focus on your skills and abilities, to help you find the type of job you want. Mediators have extensive contacts with local employers and can be helpful in finding local employment opportunities.

LES guidance counsellors can provide you with information about training, further education and second chance educational programmes. They will talk to you about your career options and identify any training programmes that may be of benefit to you. The guidance counsellor will work with you, helping to evaluate the various options available and support you in your decisions.

Through the services of both the mediator and guidance counsellors you will be able to look at the various employment schemes that might be suitable for you now and make plans for getting work after you finish the scheme(s). If you feel you want to make a longer-term plan and do some training or go back to school or college the LES will also be able to help you consider your options. Some of the LES's offer access to childcare facilities, operate Jobs Clubs and can offer specialised training courses.

You can locate your nearest Local Employment Service through the 'Find Your Local Services' map on the INOU website: www.inoue.ie

Local Development Companies

Local Development Companies were established to tackle growing unemployment in particular areas of the country. Each Local Development Company is made up of representatives from the business community, state agencies and community groups.

Local Development Companies combat unemployment and the causes of unemployment in their area by developing and supporting services to unemployed people and through involvement in other special programmes.

You can locate your nearest Local Development Company through the 'Find Your Local Services' map on the INOU website: www.inoue.ie

Social Welfare Facilitators

The role of the Facilitator is to help inform and assist people in using their employment options to move from welfare to work. As part of the Employment Support Unit of the Department of Social Protection they are based at local Social Welfare Offices around the country.

Facilitators will regularly co-operate with mediators, Jobs Clubs and Partnership Companies in helping unemployed people to progress to employment. For more information contact your local Social Welfare Office or Employment Support Services office on 1800 611 116.

You can locate your nearest Facilitator through the 'Find Your Local Services' map on the INOU website: www.inou.ie

Other Sources of Information on Jobs

The INOU website (www.inou.ie)

The INOU website is a useful source of current and archive material on unemployment issues and contains research conducted by the INOU into the barriers faced by long-term unemployed people in making the transition from welfare to work.

Newspapers

Newspapers, particularly the Sunday Independent, The Irish Independent (Thursday), The Irish Times (Friday), The Irish Examiner (Friday), Evening Herald are all useful sources of jobs. Local newspapers can also be a good source for job adverts.

Recruitment Agencies

You will find lists of Recruitment Agencies on the internet using search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing. You can usually submit your C.V. online through their website or by e-mail. Ask at your local Jobs Club or Local Employment Service (LES) for assistance in e-mailing your C.V.

Voluntary Work

If you are unemployed you can take up voluntary work while signing-on. This can be a very satisfying and rewarding way of using your time and skills to help others. Voluntary work can help you gain new skills and can in turn greatly increase your chances of getting a job. Contact Volunteering Ireland on (01) 872 2622 or visit their website www.volunteeringireland.com for more information on the range of volunteering options available.

Under the Voluntary Work Option with Social Welfare you can take up voluntary work in a community organisation and keep your Jobseekers Allowance or Jobseekers Benefit. Once you find an organisation interested in your services, you and the organisation must fill out the **VW1 form** available from your local Social Welfare office.

To use this option, you must still be genuinely seeking work and remain available to take up work. This is important as being a volunteer should not be seen as a long term replacement for a full time adequately paid job.

Applying for Jobs

Once you have spotted the job you want you will need to spend some time preparing your application. Contact your local Jobs Club or LES for help with writing covering letters, filling out application forms, updating your C.V. and preparing for interviews.

Remember employers spend time trying to find the best person for the job, so you will need to spend time telling them, as clearly as possible, that you are that person.

Read the advert a few times before you write your covering letter or decide on what to include in your C.V. It is important to contact the employer and ask for details of the job advertised (a job description if they have one) and background information on the company or organisation. Talk to people who work for the company or who do a similar job elsewhere. This will help you to focus on the details you need to stress in your C.V. and at an interview.

Jobseeker Pack

As part of the ongoing development of self-service aids and facilities, an updated Jobseeker Pack is now available through the FÁS website which gives advice on topics such as:

- **General information for Jobseekers**
- **Guide on how to use the job search facility on Jobs Ireland**
- **How to fill out an application form**
- **Preparing a CV**
- **Tips on a covering letter**
- **Tips on how to prepare for a Job Interview**
- **Useful websites**

Identifying Your Skills

You should point out your skills that are relevant to the job and mention anything that you have done to improve or up-date them. Any education or training you have done while you were unemployed or 'between jobs' will show that you are interested and motivated in improving your abilities.

Point out any work experience you have had during your period of unemployment. Include details of any voluntary work, part-time work, special responsibilities and duties, etc. – even if it was unpaid an employer may still be interested.

Highlight your key skills, achievements or qualifications, including those gained through education or training. You might like to add positive ways in which you have changed - increased maturity, improved self-confidence, etc.

The Covering Letter

This is the letter you send with your C.V. or Application Form. Remember the cover letter is the first thing that the employer will read. It should be short (one A4 size page) and to the point. It should say where you saw the job advert, why you are applying and stressing why you are suited to the job. The covering letter should not be more than 200 words and can be typed or written. Some employers may want a hand-written cover letter so be sure to read the details of the advertisement carefully.

Application Forms

Some employers may ask you to fill out an application form instead of sending in a C.V., in other cases you may be asked to do both. These application forms allow employers to ask you very precise and specific questions to determine if you are the right person for the job. You should always ensure that you fully complete the form as instructed.

If you are filling out an Application Form

- Read through the form carefully before you write anything.
- Photocopy, or copy down questions and answer them in rough before you fill in the form.
- Follow any instructions, e.g. if you are asked to use black ink then make sure you do.
- Make sure you answer all parts of every question. If the question does not apply to you, then mark it "Not Applicable" or "NA". Otherwise the employer may think you simply forgot to fill in the answer.
- If you are asked to outline facts, e.g. "Give details of your work history to date", you can attach a separate sheet of paper if you run out of space on the application form.
- If you are asked to give an opinion, e.g. "List the qualities which make you the most suitable person for the job", try to keep within the space provided on the form.

Your Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)

The purpose of your C.V. is to show an employer that you have the necessary experience, qualities and qualifications to do the job you are applying for. Your local Jobs Club, LES or local Resource Centre will be able to help you prepare or update your C.V. and assist you in photocopying, faxing or e-mailing it to an employer. The aim of your C.V. is to get you an interview with an employer, so it needs to clearly show that you have:

- The skills and experience needed for the job
- The personal qualities for the position
- An understanding of the requirements of the job.

The best way to make sure your C.V. gets read is to:

- Keep it short. Not more than two A4 pages. -
- Keep it clear. Make it easy to read. Your C.V. should always be typewritten and well laid out with wide margins. It should have clear section headings and the information should be organised in a logical and easy to follow manner.
- Keep it relevant. The employer usually has two main questions in mind when looking at an employee or potential employee: Is this person able to do the job? Will this person fit in with the rest of us?

Interviews

Your C.V. may get you an interview, but it is your interview that will get you a job. When it comes to your interview it is important to be prepared. You should contact your local Jobs Club or LES for assistance in developing your interview skills and techniques.

Remember

- You will be asked questions about your C.V., so know the contents of your C.V. Be prepared and able to answer questions on every item.
- Answering questions about your C.V. can be an opportunity for you to steer questions, and their answers, in your favour.
- Research the company/organisation you will be interviewed by.
- Find out as much as possible about the job you have applied for.
- Prepare your own answers based on the particulars of the job.
- Practice your answers, either alone or with a partner playing the role of interviewer. Your local Jobs Club or LES may be able to run a 'mock' interview for you.
- You should look neat and tidy, wearing something that allows you to feel comfortable and confident.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes early. This allows you a few minutes to compose yourself before the interview.
- Make eye contact.
- Be positive, be confident and smile!

Questions that you might ask

Interviewers expect the applicants to ask questions about the job. You should ask questions which;

- show your interest and understanding of the job
- clarify any areas of confusion about the job
- highlight your knowledge of the employer and the job

For example you could ask about;

- the prospects for promotion or advancement in the job
- what they expect of the successful applicant
- general employment conditions
- staff training and development opportunities
- job security, health benefits and company pension plans
- when you will know the outcome of the interview.

Follow up after the interview

After a certain amount of time has passed, you may wish to follow up your interview by contacting the interviewer to enquire about the position. This is particularly acceptable if it is past the agreed date for notifying candidates. You can use this opportunity to express your continued interest in the job.

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Working and claiming a Social Welfare payment

Many Social Welfare payments allow you to work part-time and continue to receive some of your Social Welfare payment, in order to support your access to employment opportunities and your progression into full-time employment.

Given the changing nature of the traditional workplace, opportunities to engage in part-time employment may arise more frequently than full-time employment. As such, part-time employment can prove a valuable source of income, provide practical and beneficial work experience and training, and can lead to full-time employment.

The key welfare payments which allow you to do this are:

- **Jobseeker's Benefit (JB)**
- **Jobseeker's Allowance (JA)**
- **One Parent Family Payment**
- **Disability Allowance (DA)**
- **Carers Benefit and Allowance**
- **Illness Benefit/Invalidity Pension**

The amount you earn from employment may affect your continued entitlement to receive your Social Welfare payment. In addition, your total income from employment and any Social Welfare payment may affect your entitlement to any existing secondary benefits you receive. This includes rent supplement and mortgage interest supplement, differential rent, if you are a local authority tenant, or the amount of rent you may pay under Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) and may also affect your entitlement to a medical card. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND JOBSEEKERS PAYMENTS

Jobseeker's payments and Self-Employment

If you are unemployed and in receipt of either Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance and you are self-employed you may be able to claim some of your Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance payment.

Jobseeker's Benefit

If you are self-employed and find that you are not getting enough work to provide a sufficient income you may seek to claim a Jobseeker's Benefit payment. This only applies if you satisfy the PRSI Contribution requirements for Jobseeker's Benefit and if you satisfy the 'Genuinely Seeking Work' conditions for all Jobseeker's payments (see Chapter 1 ■ for more information on Jobseeker's Benefit and Genuinely Seeking Work). If you do not satisfy the PRSI requirements for Jobseeker's Benefit, you may qualify for a Jobseeker's Allowance payment subject to a means test, Genuinely Seeking Work conditions and Habitual Residence Condition (HRC).

You do not need to de-register as self-employed, close your business premises or sell your equipment/materials or tools in order to qualify for a Jobseeker's Benefit payment. You will not receive any Jobseeker's Benefit payment for the

days you are engaged in self-employment, but you may receive payment for the other days you are not engaged in self-employment.

You should not seek to claim a Jobseeker's Benefit payment while engaged in self-employment without fully informing, and discussing the matter with, the Department of Social Protection. Failure to do so may result in loss of payment, loss of secondary benefits and result in an assessment of overpayment being made against you. [Contact the INOU for more information on \(01\) 856 0088.](#)

Jobseeker's Allowance

If you are self-employed and find that you are not getting enough work to provide a sufficient income you may seek to claim a Jobseeker's Allowance payment. You do not need to de-register as self-employed, close your business premises or sell your equipment/materials or tools in order to qualify for a Jobseeker's Allowance payment.

Your reduced income from self-employment will be assessed as means. You can continue to operate your business while you are getting Jobseeker's Allowance provided you do not exceed the income limits.

You may continue to be self-employed and receive a Jobseeker's Allowance payment if you meet the means test and provided you can show that you are also available for and 'Genuinely Seeking' full-time employment – see Genuinely Seeking work in Chapter 1 ■.

You may be engaged in self-employment and still qualify for a Jobseeker's Allowance payment – provided your overall income stays below a certain amount.

In such instances, the number of days you are engaged in self-employment is not relevant. You could qualify for Jobseeker's Allowance even if you are engaged in self-employment every day.

You should not seek to claim a Jobseeker's Allowance payment while engaged in self-employment without fully informing, and discussing the matter with, the Department of Social Protection. Failure to do so may result in loss of payment, loss of secondary benefits and result in an assessment of overpayment being made against you. [Contact the INOU for more information on \(01\) 856 0088.](#)

WORKING AND JOBSEEKERS PAYMENTS

Jobseeker's payments and Part-time work

If you are unemployed and in receipt of either Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance you can accept an offer of part-time work and may be able to qualify for a Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance payment for the days that you are unemployed.

Working part-time is allowed, providing that you are:

- unemployed for at least 3 days in any 6 consecutive days
- genuinely seeking full-time employment
- available for work in respect of the remaining days of unemployment

Working for any part of a day, even only for one hour, is counted as a full day of employment by the Department of Social Protection. You must advise the Department of any work you intend to undertake while receiving either Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance.

If you are engaged in part-time employment you must be available for and **Genuinely Seeking** full-time employment to qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance.

If you accept part-time work and do not continue to genuinely seek full-time employment, or cannot provide evidence of your efforts to seek full-time employment, your claim for Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance may be disallowed. See Chapter 1 ■ for more information about claiming Jobseeker's Benefit/Jobseeker's Allowance.

Part-time Work & moving from JA to JB

You can engage in part-time employment while in receipt of a Jobseeker's payment. If you are about to exhaust your claim for Jobseeker's Benefit and intend to apply for Jobseeker's Allowance it is very important that you check out if your entitlement to Jobseeker's Allowance payment will be affected by:

- any part-time employment/self-employment you are engaged in
- employment/self-employment your partner or spouse is engaged in.

Jobseeker's Benefit is a non-means tested payment, whereas Jobseeker's Allowance is means tested. The value of any other income will be counted - including savings, redundancy payments over €20,000, capital, investments or property other than your own home - and may affect your entitlement to receive a Jobseeker's Allowance payment. The first €20,000 of capital is disregarded for means purposes.

If you exhaust your Jobseeker's Benefit claim and apply for Jobseeker's Allowance you may find it necessary to apply for a means tested Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payment while your application is being processed - see Chapter 2 for more information on SWA payments. You will not normally qualify for an SWA payment if you or your spouse/partner/civil partner are working more than 30 hours per week.

Part-time work and Jobseeker's Benefit (JB)

If you are claiming Jobseeker's Benefit (JB) you can work part-time and continue to receive payment for the days you are unemployed, provided you continue to satisfy the qualifying conditions for Jobseeker's Benefit (See Chapter 1 ■ for more information on Jobseeker's Benefit).

You will not be paid Jobseeker's Benefit for the days you are employed, but your earnings from employment will not affect your remaining Jobseeker's Benefit payment.

A number of changes have been announced which affect working on Sunday and the benefit or payment week. These changes and dates of application are listed as follows:

The following applies up to **26th July 2012**

- **Payment based on 6 days:** If you are claiming Jobseeker's Benefit you can work for up to three days a week and continue to receive payment for the days you are unemployed, provided you continue to satisfy the qualifying conditions for Jobseeker's Benefit. You will not be paid Jobseeker's Benefit for the days you are employed, but your earnings from employment will not affect your remaining Jobseeker's Benefit payment.

The following applies up to **January 2013**

- **Working on Sunday:** Sunday is not considered a day of employment, so if you work on a Sunday you will not lose a portion of your weekly Jobseeker's Benefit payment for this day.

Budget 2012

It was announced in Budget 2012 that there would be changes to Jobseeker's Benefit for part-time workers.

The following change will take effect from **26th July 2012**

- **Payment based on 5 days instead of 6:** If you are in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit and take up part-time employment the payment entitlement will be based on a 5-day week rather than a 6-day week. This means that for each day that a person is unemployed, one-fifth of the normal rate of Jobseeker's Benefit is payable. So for example, if you get part-time work for 2 days, you will get three-fifths of the normal Jobseeker's Benefit for that week – see the example below.

This change only affects people who work part-time or are in casual employment and who also claim Jobseeker's Benefit for the days they are not working. If you do not work at all, you are not affected by this change, but if you stop claiming Jobseeker's Benefit, this change may affect your last weekly Jobseeker's Benefit payment.

Part-time workers, casual workers and people who work week on/week off, and who get Jobseeker's Benefit for the days they are not working will be affected by this change.

You will no longer be paid Jobseeker's Benefit in situations where you used to receive payment for one day. You must have an underlying entitlement to a minimum of 2 days Jobseeker's Benefit to receive any Jobseeker's Benefit payment. The first payments affected will be in respect of the week ending 01 August 2012.

Part-time work and Jobseeker's Benefit from 26th July 2012

Mary is a single person on Jobseeker's Benefit, normally entitled to a personal payment of €188.00 based on a 6-day Jobseekers Benefit. Mary takes up 2 days part-time employment so her Jobseeker's Benefit will be based on the new 5-day Jobseeker's Benefit rule. She is entitled to payment of Jobseeker's Benefit for 3 days while she is working 2 days. Her new rate of Jobseeker's Benefit is calculated as follows:

New JB daily rate of payment (€188 divided by 5 days)	€37.60
Mary's new rate of Jobseeker's Benefit (€37.60 x 3)	€112.80

The following change will take effect from **January 2013**

- **Working on Sunday:** Sunday will be treated as a day of employment and taken into account when calculating the amount of Jobseeker's Benefit you are entitled to be paid.

Working on Sunday and Jobseeker's Benefit from January 2013

Mary is a single person on Jobseeker's Benefit, normally entitled to a personal payment of €188.00 based on a 6-day Jobseekers Benefit. Mary takes up 1 day's part-time employment on Sunday. She is entitled to payment of Jobseeker's Benefit for 4 days based on the new 5-day Jobseeker's Benefit rule. Her new rate of Jobseeker's Benefit is calculated as follows:

New JB daily rate of payment (€188 divided by 5 days)	€37.60
Mary's new rate of Jobseeker's Benefit (€37.60 x4)	€150.40



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Spouse Working: If your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant works while you are in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit their earnings from employment will not affect your entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit. However, their earnings from employment, self-employment and any capital/savings or any other income, will be taken into account to determine if you qualify for a Qualified Adult Allowance and /or any Qualified Child payment.

Continued Child Payment: If you have been in receipt of a Jobseeker's Benefit payment for 12 months and you subsequently enter into full-time paid employment which is likely to last 4 weeks, you can keep the child portion of your payment for 13 weeks. This is known as the Continued Child Payment.

Payment is only made for children paid at the full rate. Claims for a half-rate payment for a child will not continue. The payment is made in three instalments on the first, fourth and ninth week after you start work.

You cannot receive the Continued Child Payment at the same time as Family Income Supplement. If you qualify for both of these payments, you should receive the one which gives you more money. When you close your Jobseeker's

Benefit claim, you should ask the DSP Official about making a claim for Continued Child Payment and for the form **CCP1**.

Self Employment: You can engage in self-employment while in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit. You **cannot** pursue self-employment as a full-time option while in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit, and must continue to satisfy the 'Genuinely Seeking Work' requirements of payment. If you fail to 'Genuinely Seek Work' or fail to provide evidence, to the satisfaction of the Department, of your efforts to seek employment your payment can be disallowed. If you wish to pursue self-employment as a full-time option you can apply for the **Back to Work Enterprise Allowance** or the **Short-Term Enterprise Allowance** through the Department of Social Protection.

Education Options: You cannot attend full-time education while in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit, unless you participate in the Back to Education Allowance scheme or other approved scheme. You can engage in part-time education, as long as you continue to satisfy the 'Genuinely Seeking Working' requirements (see Chapter 1 ■).

Family Income Supplement: Persons in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit (JB) cannot qualify for a Family Income Supplement Payment (FIS).

Revenue Job Assist: If you have been claiming Jobseeker's Benefit for 12 months or more and you are offered a job which is for 30 hours per week or more and which is capable of lasting at least 12 months you may be able to claim additional tax allowances under the Revenue Job Assist scheme. An extra tax allowance can be claimed for each qualifying child. The tax allowance can be claimed for 3 tax years and may begin with either the tax year in which the employment commences or the following tax year. See Revenue Job Assist in this Chapter.

Employer Job (PRSI) Exemption Scheme: This Scheme means that when an employer hires additional eligible workers, they will not have to pay employer's PRSI in respect of their employment for 18 months from the date the employee is approved for the scheme. Employers are limited to a maximum of 5% of their existing workforce or five employees, whichever is greater. To qualify an employer must employ a person who has been in receipt of one of the following payments for a continuous period of at least 6 months (156 days):

- **Jobseeker's Benefit (JB)**
- **Jobseeker's Allowance (JA)**
- **One Parent Family Payment**
- **Disability Allowance**

Time spent on JobBridge or the Work Placement Programme is also reckonable for eligibility purposes. An eligible person can be employed directly from either of these schemes once the required 156 days criteria has been satisfied.

While not a direct payment or tax benefit to you as an employee, the PRSI savings may support the decision of the employer to give you the job.

Part-time Job Incentive Scheme: This scheme only applies to persons in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance for 15 months or more. Persons on Jobseeker's Benefit do not qualify.

Work Placement Programme (WPP): You can participate in the Work Placement Programme, even if you are not in receipt of a Social Welfare payment. If you are getting a qualifying social welfare payment (See **Work Placement Programme** in this Chapter) for at least 3 months, you may be able to keep your payment while on the Work Placement Programme. You must first receive the approval of the Department of Social Protection. Arrangements have been made to allow participants on the Work Placement Programme to sign on by post if they are claiming Jobseeker's payments.

Secondary Benefits: Additional income from employment may affect entitlement to Secondary Benefits such as Rent Supplement, Mortgage Interest Supplement and Medical Card. It may also result in an increase in Local Authority rent or rent paid under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).

Re-qualifying for Jobseeker's Benefit

If you engage in part-time work while in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit you may re-qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit when your current claim is exhausted. See Chapter 1 ■ for more information or contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Part-time work and Jobseeker's Allowance (JA)

If you are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) you can work for up to three days a week and continue to receive payment for the days you are unemployed, provided you continue to satisfy the means test and the normal qualifying conditions for Jobseeker's Allowance (See Chapter 1 ■ for more information on Jobseeker's Allowance).

Working on Sunday

The following applies up to **January 2013:**

- **Working on Sunday:** Sunday is not considered a day of employment, so if you work on a Sunday you will not lose a portion of your weekly Jobseeker's Allowance payment for this day. There are some circumstances when working on Sunday may affect your Jobseeker's Allowance payment – please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

The following change will take effect from **January 2013**

- **Working on Sunday:** Sunday will be treated as a day of employment and taken into account when calculating the amount of Jobseeker's Allowance you are entitled to be paid.

Assessment of Earnings

Your earnings from employment are assessed by taking your gross weekly earnings and deducting payments* for:

- PRSI (Pay Related Social Insurance)
- Pensions (including the pension levy)
- Trade Union subscriptions

*The Universal Social Charge – USC – is not deducted.

A daily disregard of €20.00 a day is applied for each day worked up to a maximum of 3 days (€60.00). This daily disregard is combined for the number of days worked and deducted before income assessment.

After subtracting the allowable deductions and applicable daily disregards the value of the remaining balance is assessed at 60% and taken as the weekly means from insurable employment. Please see the following example.

Example: Part-time work and Jobseeker's Allowance

Mary is a single person on Jobseeker's Allowance, normally entitled to a payment of €188.00 a week. When she finds two days full-time (8 hrs. per day) work, her assessable earnings, after the allowable deductions, is €200. Her new rate of Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) is calculated as follows:

Earnings for two days (€100 per day x 2 days)	€200.00
Earnings disregard for two days (€20 per day x 2 days)	€40.00
Assessable income from employment (earnings €200 – disregard €40)	€160.00
Income assessed at 60% (€160 @ 60%)	€96.00
Mary's weekly means is	€96.00
Mary's new rate of Jobseeker's Allowance (€188 - €96 means)	€92.00
Two days assessable earnings	€200.00
Plus JA payment	+€92.00
New Total household income	€292.00



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Habitual Residence Condition: Persons applying for Jobseeker's Allowance must satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition.

Continued Child Payment: If you have been in receipt of a Jobseeker's Allowance payment for 12 months or more and you subsequently enter into full-time paid employment which is likely to last 4 weeks, you can keep the child portion of your payment for 13 weeks. This is known as the Continued Child Payment.

Payment is only made for children paid at the full rate. Claims for a half-rate payment for a child will not continue. The payment is made in three instalments on the first, fourth and ninth week after you start work.

You cannot receive the Continued Child Payment at the same time as Family Income Supplement. If you qualify for both of these payments, you should receive the one which gives you more money. When you close your Jobseeker's Allowance claim, you should ask the deciding officer about making a claim for Continued Child Payment and for the form **CCP1**.

Revenue Job Assist: If you have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for 12 months or more and you are offered a job which is for 30 hours per week or more and which is capable of lasting at least 12 months you may be able to claim additional tax allowances under the Revenue Job Assist scheme. An extra tax allowance can be claimed for each qualifying child. The tax allowance can be claimed for 3 tax years and may begin with either the tax year in which the employment commences or the following tax year. See Revenue Job Assist in this Chapter.

Employer Job (PRSI) Exemption Scheme: This scheme means that when an employer hires additional eligible workers, they will not have to pay employer's PRSI in respect of their employment for 18 months from the date the employee is approved for the scheme. Employers are limited to a maximum of 5% of their existing workforce of five employees, whichever is greater. To qualify an employer must employ a person who has been in receipt of one of the following payments for a continuous period of at least 6 months (156 days):

- Jobseeker's Benefit (JB)
- Jobseeker's Allowance (JA)
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Disability Allowance

Time spent on JobBridge or the Work Placement Programme is also reckonable for eligibility purposes. An eligible person can be employed directly from either of these schemes once the required 156 days criteria has been satisfied.

While not a direct payment or tax benefit to you as an employee, the PRSI savings may support the decision of the employer to give you the job.

Part-time Job Incentive Scheme: This scheme allows people who have been getting Jobseeker's Allowance for 15 months or more to take up part-time work and get a Part-time Job Allowance instead of the Jobseeker's Allowance. If you are working part-time, under 24 hours per week, and your Jobseeker's Allowance payment has been reduced, but is equal to or more than €119.00 if you are single or €193.90 if you are being paid for your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant, you may be financially better off applying for the Part-Time Job Incentive Scheme. The Allowance is payable regardless of the money you earn in your job and you may qualify for Family Income Supplement. Please see the **Part-Time Job Incentive Scheme** in this chapter.

Spouse Working: If your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant works, or is engaged in self-employment or has any capital/savings or other assessable income, while you are in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance their earnings from employment or assessable means can affect the amount of Jobseeker's Allowance the family unit receives. See the following pages for more information.

Education Options: You cannot attend full-time education while in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance, unless you participate in the Back to Education Allowance scheme or other approved scheme. You can engage in part-time education, as long as you continue to satisfy the 'Genuinely Seeking Working' requirements (see Chapter 1 ■).

Family Income Supplement: Persons in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) cannot qualify for a Family Income Supplement Payment (FIS).

Self Employment: You can engage in self-employment while in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance. You must continue to satisfy the '*Genuinely Seeking Work*' conditions to retain any Jobseeker's Allowance payment. There is no €20 daily disregard for self-employment, as is available to those engaged in 'regular' employment under Jobseeker's Allowance rules. If you have been self-employed, paying a Class S PRSI contribution, you do not have to de-register, wind up or close your business in order to receive Jobseeker's Allowance while self-employed part-time. If you wish to pursue self-employment as a full-time option you may qualify for the **Back to Work Enterprise Allowance** – [For more information, contact the INOU on \(01\) 856 0088.](#)

Secondary Benefits: Additional income from employment or self-employment may affect entitlement to Secondary Benefits such as Rent Supplement, Mortgage Interest Supplement and Medical Card. It may also result in an increase in Local Authority rent or rent paid under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).

Other Working and Claiming situations

Reduced Hours or Pay: If you have been working full-time and your employer reduces the number of days you work because of a downturn in business, you may be able to make a claim for a Jobseeker's payment for the days that you are unemployed provided you meet the other conditions that apply to Jobseeker's payments. See Reduced Hours or Pay (Short-time and Lay off) in Chapter 2.

Job Sharing: You will not be eligible for Jobseeker's Benefit if you voluntarily take up a job-sharing arrangement, if you have been working full-time. If however, the change was not voluntary you can pursue a Jobseeker's payment.

Week on/Week off: If you are working week on/week off your entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit will depend on a number of conditions including your availability for work and whether you satisfy the '*Genuinely Seeking Work*' requirements of the payment.

Signing off for up to 4 weeks – FastTrack: If you have been offered full time employment, or work for 4 days or more, for up to 4 weeks you will not qualify for Jobseeker's Allowance. However the Department of Social Protection operates a fast-tracking system for customers who sign off to take up work for a short period, up to 4 weeks. This ensures that payment is re-instated without delay. It is important that you inform the local office in advance that you are taking up work. [Contact the INOU on \(01\) 856 0088 for more information.](#)

Jobseeker's payment – Qualified Adult working

The spouse/civil partner/cohabitant of a person in receipt of a Jobseeker's payment is referred to as a Qualified Adult. A Qualified Adult may take up

either full-time or part-time employment while their partner is in receipt of a Jobseeker's payment. A Qualified Adult is not subject to the *Genuinely Seeking Work* condition that applies to the claimant. There is no restriction on the number of hours or days that a Qualified Adult may work.

While the amount of hours/days the Qualified Adult works will not affect the Jobseeker's payment, the amount of money the Qualified Adult earns may affect the family's rate of payment.

- Married couples, persons who have entered into a civil partnership and co-habiting couples are assessed in the same way by the Department of Social Protection. Co-habiting couples are not assessed for tax purposes, by the Revenue Commissioners, in the same way as married couples and persons who have entered into a civil partnership.

Jobseeker's Benefit and Qualified Adult Working

The rates of payment for Jobseekers Benefit are linked to the claimant's average weekly earnings in employment in the governing contribution year (GCY) of their claim. The income of the qualified adult determines if a qualified adult allowance is payable.

- Less than €300 per week the Qualified Adult payment is €80.90 per week
- €300 or more per week the Qualified Adult payment is €124.80 per week

Qualified Adult in Employment – (PRSI Class A employee)

If you are claiming Jobseeker's Benefit and your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant (Qualified Adult) works, their gross earnings will be counted as follows (please note PRSI, pension payments and union subscriptions are **not** deducted from the gross):

- Spouse/partner earns **up to and including** €100.00 a week - Jobseeker's Benefit Claimant will receive a full Qualified Adult payment
- Spouse/partner earns **between** €100.01 and €310.00 per week - Jobseeker's Benefit Claimant will receive a tapered* Qualified Adult rate .
- Spouse/partner earns gross earnings **over** €310. A Qualified Adult payment is no longer payable to the Jobseeker's Benefit Claimant.

*Tapered rates of payment are a reducing scale of payments for Qualified Adults based on the level of their assessable income. The rates are listed on the Social Welfare Website at

www.welfare.ie/EN/Publications/sw19/Documents/sw19.pdf.

Family Income Supplement

If your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant is working and you are claiming a Qualified Adult increase on your Jobseeker's payment for him/her your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant can opt to apply for FIS instead if the FIS payment is more than the Qualified Adult increase. However, people receiving Jobseeker's Payments and working cannot claim FIS. Please contact the INOU for more information on (01) 856 0088.

Qualified Adult Self-employed – (PRSI Class S)

If you are claiming Jobseeker's Benefit and your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant (Qualified Adult) is engaged in Self-employment their earnings will be assessed as follows:

- Earnings are assessed as gross income less work related expenses over 12 months.
- Expected annual earnings from self-employment are divided by 52 to find your spouse/partners weekly means from self-employment.
- 'Drawings' taken from the business is not an allowable expense.
- If the 'drawings' from the business are greater than the net profit calculated, the 'drawings' are assessed as income.

There is no exhaustive list of all expenses allowed because expenses vary with the nature and extent of the self-employment. However a full list is available from the Department of Social Protection www.welfare.ie

The Department of Social Protection may request copies of your partner's audited business accounts for the most recent trading year in addition to other documentation. If you fail to provide this information your application for Jobseeker's Allowance cannot be processed.

Secondary Benefits: Additional income from employment may affect entitlement to Secondary Benefits such as Rent Supplement, Mortgage Interest Supplement and Medical Card. It may also result in an increase in Local Authority rent or rent paid under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS). Please contact the INOU for more information on (01) 856 0088.

Jobseeker's Allowance and Qualified Adult Working

The Qualified Adult of a person in receipt of a Jobseeker's Allowance claim can take up either full-time or part-time employment. The Qualified Adult is not subject to the Genuinely Seeking Work condition and there is no restriction on the number of hours or days which may be worked by the Qualified Adult.

The amount of money the Qualified Adult earns may affect the family's rate of Jobseeker's Allowance payment.

Qualified Adult in Employment – (PRSI Class A employee)

If you are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and your spouse / civil partner / cohabitant (Qualified Adult) works, their gross earnings will be counted as follows (please note PRSI, pension payments and union subscriptions are deducted from the gross)

- Income of €20 per day is disregarded for up to 3 days (max. €60)
- All other income above the daily disregard is assessed at 60%

Qualified Adult (Jobseeker's Allowance) – Working 3 days

Liz, a mother of two children, is a qualified adult on her partner Tom's Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) claim. Tom receives €372.40 Jobseeker's Allowance on behalf of the family. Liz finds three days part-time insurable work. Her assessable earnings after the allowable deductions are €120. The family's new rate of JA is calculated as follows:-

Current Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) Family rate:	€372.40
Liz's earnings (3 days at €40 per day):	€120.00
3 day disregard (€20 per day x 3 days):	€60.00
Liz's Assessable income after disregard: (€120 - €60)	€60.00
Assess 60% of net remainder (€60 assessed at 60%)	€36.00
New JA rate (€372.40 - €36 assessable earnings):	€336.40
Plus Liz's earnings	€120.00
New Household Income: (reduced JA + net Wages)	€456.40

Qualified Adult (Jobseeker's Allowance) – Working 5 days

John and Mary have two children and have a family Jobseeker's Allowance rate of €372.40.

Mary finds work over five days. Her assessable earnings, after allowable deductions, are €200. Their new Jobseeker's Allowance rate is calculated as follows.

- Current Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) Family rate:	€372.40
- Mary's earnings (5 days at €40 per day):	€200.00
- Less disregard (only allowed for 3 days at €20 per day)	€60.00
- Mary's Assessable income after disregard (€200 - €60):	€140.00
- Assess 60% of remainder (€140 assessed at 60%)	€84.00
- New JA rate (€372.40 - €84.00 assessable earnings)	€288.40
- Plus Mary's earnings	€200.00
New household income (reduced JA + net Wages)	€488.40

Qualified Adult Self-employed – (PRSI Class S)

If you are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and your spouse/civil partner / cohabitant (Qualified Adult) is engaged in Self-employment their earnings will be assessed as follows:

- Earnings are assessed as gross income less work related expenses over 12 months.
- Expected annual earnings from self-employment are divided by 52 to find your spouse/partners weekly means from self-employment.
- 'Drawings' taken from the business is not an allowable expense.

- If the 'drawings' from the business are greater than the net profit calculated, the 'drawings' are assessed as income.

There is no exhaustive list of all expenses allowed because expenses vary with the nature and extent of the self-employment. However a full list is available from the Department of Social Protection www.welfare.ie

The Department of Social Protection may request copies of your partner's audited business accounts for the most recent trading year in addition to other documentation. If you fail to provide this information your application for Jobseekers Allowance cannot be processed.

Other options for Qualified Adults

Back to Work Enterprise Allowance: A Qualified Adult of a person who is eligible to claim the BTWEA can participate on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance in support of their efforts to become self-employed. This requires that the person who is eligible for the BTWEA transfers his or her entitlements to participate in the scheme to their spouse, civil partner or cohabitant under what is known as a 'spousal swap'.

Community Employment: A Qualified Adult of an eligible claimant can only participate on a Community Employment scheme where a 'spousal swap' occurs.

Schemes not available to Qualified Adults:

The following schemes are not available to the Qualified Adults of eligible claimants and there is no 'spousal swap' facility attached to these schemes.

- Short-Term Enterprise Allowance
- JobBridge (National Internship Scheme)
- Revenue Job Assist
- Tús - Community work placement initiative
- Part-time Job Incentive Scheme

Family Income Supplement: If your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant is working and you are claiming a Qualified Adult increase on your Jobseeker's payment for him/her, your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant can opt to apply for FIS instead if the FIS payment is more than the Qualified Adult increase. However, people receiving Jobseeker's Allowance and working cannot claim FIS.

JOBSEEKER'S AND WORK – A USEFUL CHECKLIST

Genuinely Seeking Work:

- If you take up part-time employment while the Main Claimant on Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit you must be able to show that you are Genuinely Seeking Work and continue to seek full-time employment while working part-time.

- You must be registered with and regularly using FÁS to look for employment or training opportunities. Evidence of this might be required if your claim for a Jobseeker's payment is being reviewed by the Department under Genuinely Seeking Work conditions.

Part-time Work:

- Would you be better off claiming a Family Income Supplement (FIS) instead of a Qualified Adult payment if you are working?
- Would you be better off claiming a FIS instead of a Qualified Adult payment if your spouse / civil partner / cohabitant is working?
- Would you be better off financially on the Part-time Job Incentive Scheme?

Full-time Work:

- Do you qualify for the Revenue Job Assist Scheme?
- Do you qualify for the Employer Job (PRSI) Exemption Scheme?

Secondary Benefits:

- There is no limit on the number of hours your Qualified Adult can work while you are on Jobseeker's Benefit or Allowance, if your Qualified Adult works for 30 hours or more you may not qualify for a Rent Supplement.
- How will income from employment or self-employment affect your entitlement to Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement?
- How will my spouse / civil partner / cohabitants income from employment or self-employment affect my entitlement to Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement?
- How will any additional income from employment affect your Local Authority Rent or rent paid under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)?

Return to Work Supports:

- Remember to check if you can avail of the Revenue Job Assist, Part-time Job Incentive scheme, Employer (PRSI) Exemption scheme or Continued Child Payment if you are returning to work.

For more information:

- Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 or on the INOU website www.inou.ie.

ONE-PARENT FAMILY PAYMENT (OPFP) AND WORK

The One-Parent Family Payment (OPFP) is a payment for both men and women who, for a variety of reasons, are bringing up a child, or children, without the support of a spouse or partner. To be eligible for this payment a person must be either –

- widowed (includes a person divorced from spouse prior to spouse's death and not remarried or person whose civil partnership has been dissolved prior to civil partner's death and who has not registered in a new civil partnership)
- separated (or divorced)

- unmarried (including one whose marriage has been annulled or civil partnership has been dissolved) or
- a prisoner's spouse/civil partner

The One-Parent Family Payment is a means tested payment (see Chapter 1 ■ for details of the means test) made up of a personal rate and payment for qualified children. Unlike Jobseeker's Allowance and Jobseeker's Benefit, persons on the One Parent Family Payment do not have to satisfy the *Genuinely Seeking Work* condition to qualify for the payment.

You cannot claim the One Parent Family Payment if:

- You do not have any dependant children of qualifying age,
- You have not been living apart from your spouse/civil partner for 3 months
- You are cohabiting. Cohabiting means in a relationship and living with another person of the same or opposite sex,
- You do not satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition (see Habitual Residence Condition in Chapter 1 ■),
- You are residing outside of Ireland,
- You do not satisfy the means test. This is where the value of any income, savings or investments or value of property other than your own home is more than is allowed for under the means test.

Rates of payment: The current personal payment rate on the One Parent Family Payment is €188.00. The current rate of payment for each qualified child is €29.80.

Seeking Maintenance:

If you are separated, divorced or your civil partnership is dissolved you must:

- Have made efforts to get maintenance from your spouse or civil partner (if your civil partner is the parent of the child/ren)
- Be inadequately maintained by your spouse or civil partner (if your civil partner is the parent of the child/ren) payment.

If you were not married to the parent of your child/children you do not need to seek maintenance from the other parent when you first claim One Parent Family Payment. However you must make efforts to seek maintenance from the other parent to continue to be eligible for the One Parent Family Payment.

Assessment of Maintenance: All income from maintenance is assessed as means. This includes both maintenance for you, and maintenance to you for any of your children. Your rent or mortgage payments, up to a maximum of €95.23 per week, can be offset against maintenance payments you receive from your spouse/civil partner. Half the balance of maintenance is then assessed as means and your One Parent Family Payment will be reduced by that amount. You must provide proof of rent or mortgage payments.

Key Points:

- You can earn up to €130.00 from employment and it will not affect your

One Parent Family payment, but you must inform the Department of Social Protection of a change in your circumstances, i.e. that you are working.

- If you earn between €130.01 and €425.00, you may qualify for a reduced payment. Further reductions to the earnings allowed will be introduced over the following 4 years: to €110 in 2013, €90 in 2014, €75 in 2015 and €60 in 2016.
- The payment of half of the rate of the One-Parent Family Payment, where assessable earnings are more than €425 per week, has been discontinued for new claimants from 5 January 2012. If you were in receipt of the half-rate OPFP before 5 January 2012 the half-rate payment will not be affected and will continue for 6 months in total.
- The first €75 from employment is not counted against your Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement. 25% of the balance is not counted. The remainder is counted euro for euro. If you take up full-time work (over 30 hours per week) you may lose your Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement.
- A disregard will apply for PRSI, Superannuation, Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSA) together with additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) to PRSA, and trade union subscriptions.
- There is **no** disregard in respect of the Universal Social Charge.
- Income from employment / self-employment may affect your Local Authority Rent or Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) rent.
- Claimants can receive the One Parent Family Tax Credit, which is double the single person's tax credit.
- If you take up full-time work (over 30 hours per week) you may be able to retain your Medical Card for up to 3 years.
- Your Rent Supplement/Mortgage Interest Supplement/Local Authority Rent/Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) rent could also be affected
- If you are employed for 19 or more hours per week (or 38 or more hours per fortnight), and your income is below a certain limit for your family size you can apply for the Family Income Supplement (FIS)

Changes to the One Parent Family Payment

New Applicants

From 3rd May 2012, all new applicants for the One Parent Family Payment will only be paid the One Parent Family Payment until their youngest child reaches the age of 12. When the youngest child reaches 12 the One Parent Family Payment will stop completely.

Where the person no longer qualifies for a One Parent Family Payment they may be able to seek an alternative Social Welfare payment, subject to satisfying the qualifying conditions of the particular payment/scheme. If unemployed

they can apply for either Jobseekers Allowance or Jobseekers Benefit. If unfit for work they can apply for Disability Allowance, Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension. If providing care they can apply for Carer's Allowance /Carer's Benefit.

Existing Recipients

For those already in receipt of the One Parent Family Payment before the changes come into effect (before 27th April 2011) payment of the One Parent Family payment will stop when the youngest child reaches the following age:

- 2013** payment stops when youngest child reaches 17. See below regarding payment of OFP until the end of the academic year 2012/2013. From the end of the academic year 2012/2013 payment will stop when the youngest child reaches 17 years
- 2014** payment stops when youngest child reaches 16
- 2015** payment stops when youngest child reaches 7

One Parent Families who made a claim for the OPFP **before the 27th April 2011** will be paid until the end of the academic year 2012/2013 for all children under 18 years and children between 18 -22 years if in fulltime education.

One Parent Families who applied for the OPFP between **27th April 2011 to 3rd May 2012** will be paid until their youngest child reaches 14 years of age.

CLAIM ENDS WHEN YOUNGEST CHILD REACHES:

Date of claim	2012	2013	2014	2015
If your claim started before 27 April 2011 payment will continue until your youngest child reaches: →	18 or 22 if in education	17 or if 17-22 and in education. End academic year 2012/13	16	7
If your claim started before 27 April 2011 and 3 May 2012 payment will continue until your youngest child reaches: →	14	12	10	7
If your claim starts after 3 May 2012 payment will continue until your youngest child reaches: →	12	10	7	7

- One Parent Families who have their OPFP stopped because of a means test or who are returning to education under BTEA can return to the One Parent Family Payment on the basis of the above age limits.
- Special arrangements apply to those in receipt of Domiciliary Care Allowance and to parents who have been recently bereaved.

Earnings Disregard (Employment): The first €130.00 of 'gross' weekly income from employment is disregarded. If your gross weekly earnings are less than €425 you can make a claim/continue to receive the One Parent Family Payment. Deductions are allowed for PRSI, pension payments, and trade union subscriptions. After disregarding the first €130.00 of 'gross' income, the balance, up to €425, is divided by two to determine the actual means that are assessed. The Deciding Officer will then compare this figure to a means band chart to determine the actual means that will be assessed. The new rate of payment is calculated by using the sliding payment scale as listed in the Department of Social Protection rates of payment book (SW19) – see the www.welfare.ie website. Means from all sources including insurable employment are assessed.

Earnings Disregard (Self-Employment): Income from Self-Employment is assessed in the following manner:

- Assessed as 'gross' income, less work related expenses, over 12 months.
- Expected annual earnings from self-employment are divided by 52 to find your weekly means from self-employment.
- 'Drawings' taken from the business are not an allowable expense.
- If the 'drawings' from the business are greater than the net profit calculated, the 'drawings' are assessed as net income.
- There is no exhaustive list of all expenses allowed because expenses vary with the nature and extent of the self-employment. However a full list is available from the Department of Social Protection www.welfare.ie
- The Department of Social Protection may request copies of your audited business accounts for the most recent trading year in addition to other documentation. If you fail to provide this information your application for/continued payment of the OPFP may be stopped.
- The standard disregard of between €130.00 to €425.00 is applied to your assessable earnings, and your One Parent Family Payment is adjusted according to the sliding scale payment – see SW 19 rates of payment on www.welfare.ie
- If you have income over €425 per week you will not qualify for any payment on the One Parent Family Payment.

Reduced Hours or Pay: If you have been working full-time and your employer reduces the number of days you work because of a downturn in business, you may be entitled to an increase in the rate of payment on your One Parent Family Payment. To get an increase in your One-Parent Family Payment send a current payslip (showing your reduced pay) with a letter from your employer,

confirming your new work situation, to the Social Welfare Local Office dealing with your claim.

Revenue Job Assist: This is an additional tax allowance available for One Parent Families where the claimant is returning to employment. An extra tax allowance can be claimed for each qualifying child. The tax allowance can be claimed for 3 tax years and may begin with either the tax year in which the employment commences or the following tax year.

Employer Job (PRSI) Exemption Scheme: This Scheme means that when an employer hires additional eligible workers, they will not have to pay employer's PRSI in respect of their employment for 18 months from the date the employee is approved for the scheme. Under this scheme, employers are limited to a maximum of 5% of their existing workforce of five employees, whichever is greater. To qualify an employer must employ a person who has been in receipt of one of the OPFP for a continuous period of at least 6 months.

While not a direct payment or tax benefit to you as an employee, the PRSI savings may support the decision of the employer to give you the job.

Self Employment: You can engage in self-employment while in receipt of the One Parent Family Payment. Income from self-employment may affect your payment. If you have been self-employed, paying a Class S PRSI contribution, you do not have to de-register, wind up or close your business in order to receive the One Parent Family Payment while self-employed. [For more information, contact the INOU on \(01\) 856 0088.](#)



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Community Employment: The way participation on Community Employment affects your entitlement to the One Parent Family Payment changed in Budget 2012.

Half-Rate Social Welfare Payments: Entitlement to half-rate payment of Jobseeker's Benefit, Illness Benefit and Incapacity Supplement for recipients of the One Parent Family Payment have stopped after the 16th January 2012. Persons in receipt of half-rate payments on Jobseeker's Benefit, Illness Benefit and Incapacity Supplement before the 16th January 2012 will continue to receive half-rate payments until the half-rate benefit period is exhausted. You can continue to get half-rate Maternity Benefit, Carers Allowance, Adoptive Benefit and Health and Safety Benefit with One Parent Family Payment.

Schemes not available to One Parent Family Payment:

The following schemes are not available to persons in receipt of the One Parent Family Payment:

- Short-Term Enterprise Allowance
- Tús - Community work placement initiative
- Part-time Job Incentive Scheme

JobBridge – National Internship: From the 28th May 2012 One Parent Family customers are eligible to apply for JobBridge. This is a National Internship Scheme that provides work experience placements for interns for a 6 or 9 month period. Interns receive an additional allowance of €50 per week on top of their existing social welfare payment which is payable from the Department of Social Protection for the period of the internship.

Family Income Supplement (FIS): If you are employed for 19 or more hours per week (or 38 or more hours per fortnight), and your income is below a certain limit for your family size you can apply for the Family Income Supplement (FIS). Your wages and One Parent Family Payment will be treated as means in deciding if you have any entitlement to FIS.

Medical Card: You may be able to retain your medical card for up to 3 years if you return to full-time or part-time work while in receipt of the One Parent Family Payment.

Redundancy Payments: The One Parent Family Payment is a means tested payment. If you are employed, are made redundant and receive a redundancy payment this may affect the rate of payment on your One Parent Family Payment. Although you may have paid enough PRSI contributions while working to qualify for a Jobseeker's Benefit payment, you will not be able to claim the One Parent Family Payment and Jobseeker's Benefit together if you are made redundant.

Habitual Residence Condition: Persons applying for the One Parent Family Payment must satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition. From May 2005, EU citizens, EEA citizens and Swiss nationals who are employed or self-employed in Ireland and paying into the Irish Social Insurance System – or who are claiming Jobseeker's Benefit at the time of making their OPFP claim – will automatically satisfy the habitual residence condition.

One Parent Family Payment and Working

Jane is a lone parent with one child receiving a One Parent Family Payment of €217.80, who finds work paying €220 per week. Her new rate of One Parent Family Payment is calculated as follows:

Jane's gross earnings	€220.00
Less disregarded	- €130.00
Total	€90.00
Divided by 2	€45.00
Jane's weekly OPFP rate	€217.80*
Less Means deducted for €45.00 (valued at €37.50) =	€37.50
New weekly rate	€180.30
Jane's gross earnings	€220.00
Plus revised One Parent Family Payment rate	+ €180.30
Total household income	€400.30

*See SW19 on www.welfare.ie for the sliding scale of payments based on assessable income

One Parent Family Payment – Losing your Payment

Employment: In some instances recipients of the One Parent Family Payment will no longer qualify for the payment because of the amount of their earnings from employment. You will not receive a One Parent Family Payment if your earnings are more than €425 per week.

No Qualified Children: If you do not have at least one qualified child you will no longer qualify for a One Parent Family Payment. There is no 'replacement' payment for the One Parent Family Payment. If you are unemployed you may apply for a Jobseekers Allowance payment, if you are ill or incapable of work you may apply for Disability Allowance, Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension subject to meeting other qualifying conditions.

Married or Co-habiting: You will not qualify for payment of the One Parent Family Payment if you are co-habiting or living as part of a couple of same or opposite sex. Your entitlement to the payment will stop as and from the date of marriage/re-marriage, or date registered in a civil partnership or date registered of a new civil partnership following dissolution of a civil partnership or from the date you begin co-habiting. You may also be the subject of Recovery of Payment/Over-payments proceedings by the Department of Social Protection. See Chapter 1 ■ for more information on Recovery of Payment/Overpayments.

Failing to provide information or disclose means: The Department of Social Protection reserve the right to review claims for the One Parent Family. This may mean that you receive a visit from a Social Welfare Inspector or are asked to attend an interview with a Social Welfare Inspector/Deciding Officer to review your claim.

Right of Appeal:

If you are unhappy with the Department's decision in relation to the withdrawal or suspension of your One Parent Family Payment or if wish to appeal a disallowance you may appeal that decision. Please see Social Welfare Appeals in Chapter 1 ■ for more information.

WORKING AND CLAIMING A DISABILITY PAYMENT

There are three main types of Disability/Illness payments available from the Department of Social Protection. Each payment type has its own qualification requirements.

- **Disability Allowance (DA):** A weekly allowance paid to people with a disability. The disability must be expected to last for at least one year. It is subject to a medical assessment and a means test (this means test does not count the first €50,000 of capital/savings or your own home). The payment is made for the duration of the person's disability and may be subject to further medical reviews.
- **Illness Benefit (IB):** A weekly benefit paid to people who are/have been in insured employment and who cannot work due to illness. It is based on

PRSI contributions, paid for a maximum of 2 years. It is not means tested – but is subject to a medical assessment and the provision of medical evidence.

- **Invalidity Pension (IP):** A weekly benefit paid to people who are permanently incapable of work because of an illness or incapacity. It is based on PRSI contributions, it is not means tested – but is subject to a medical assessment. In the event of a permanent illness/incapacity qualified persons may progress from Illness Benefit to this payment.

Not Capable of Work

All disability payments are made on the understanding that the claimant is not capable of work; however, under Disability Allowance claimants may apply for an exemption to undertake rehabilitative work, while persons in receipt of Illness Benefit and Invalidity Pension can transfer to the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB). Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information

Disability Allowance (DA) and Work

To qualify for Disability Allowance (DA) you must:

- Have an injury, disease or physical or mental disability that has continued or may be expected to continue for at least one year
- As a result of this disability you must be substantially restricted in undertaking work that would otherwise be suitable for a person of your age, experience and qualifications.
- Be aged between 16 and 66.
- Satisfy a means test (See Chapter 1 ■).
- Satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition (See Chapter 1 ■).

Rates of Payment:

Personal Allowance	=	€188.00 (maximum rate)
Qualified Adult	=	€124.80
Each Qualified Child	=	€29.80 (full rate)
Living Alone Increase	=	€ 7.70

Disability Allowance – Duration of payment

You will continue to receive a Disability Allowance payment if you satisfy the medical conditions and the means test. There is no cap or limit on the amount of time that you can receive a Disability Allowance payment provided you satisfy the conditions and are aged 16 or over and are under 66.

Disability Allowance – Rehabilitative Work

If you are in receipt of Disability Allowance (DA) you are allowed to participate in approved 'rehabilitative' work (employment or self-employment) and retain

some or all of your Disability Allowance (DA) payment. You must apply for and receive permission from the Department of Social Protection before taking-up any 'rehabilitative' work. You must submit a letter from your doctor confirming that the work you propose to undertake is rehabilitative in nature. Failure to secure permission before taking up rehabilitative employment / self-employment could result in a suspension/withdrawal of your payment and an assessment of overpayment against you. Secondary benefits, such as Rent or Mortgage Supplement, and Local Authority Rents or rent payable under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) may be affected by income.

Rehabilitative Work – Exemptions

An exemption to engage in rehabilitative work can last for up to 12 months, or the specific duration of the rehabilitative employment. Granting of an exemption is at the discretion of the Department of Social Protection and cannot be appealed to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. You must reapply for a further exemption when your current exemption runs out. While it would appear that there is no official limit on the number of exemptions which may be granted, Department of Social Protection will consider any future benefits of rehabilitative work and the nature your disability in determining if any further exemptions should be given.

Changes 2012: From 13th February 2012 people in receipt of Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension can no longer apply for exemptions to engage in Rehabilitative Work and must participate in the Partial Capacity Benefit scheme if they wish to engage in employment while in receipt of their payment. See Illness Benefit/Invalidity Pension on the following pages for more information on the Partial Capacity Benefit scheme.

Rehabilitative Work – Assessment of Earnings

Income from rehabilitative work is assessed as follows. The first €120 per week will not affect the Disability Allowance payment. Earnings between €120 and €350 are assessed at 50%. Income over €350 is fully assessed euro for euro – for example:

Income from rehabilitative work	= €200
Rehabilitative earnings disregard	= €120
Balance	= €80
Actual assessable income from employment	= €40
Result - DA payment will be reduced by	= €40 per week

**Community Employment is not classed as Rehabilitative Work.*

Disability Allowance – Community Employment

The way participation on Community Employment affects your entitlement to Disability Allowance changed in Budget 2012.

Disability Allowance – Returning to Employment

JobBridge – National Internship: JobBridge is a National Internship Scheme that provides work experience placements for interns for a 6 or 9 month period. Interns receive an additional allowance of €50 per week on top of their existing social welfare payment which is payable from the Department of Social Protection for the period of the internship.

Back to Work Enterprise Allowance: If you wish to pursue self-employment as a full-time option you can apply for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance through the Department of Social Protection.

Revenue Job Assist: If you have been claiming Disability Allowance for 12 months or more and you are offered a job which is for 30 hours per week or more and which is capable of lasting at least 12 months you may be able to claim additional tax allowances under the Revenue Job Assist scheme.

Employer Job (PRSI) Exemption Scheme: This Scheme means that when an employer hires additional eligible workers, they will not have to pay employer's PRSI in respect of their employment for 18 months from the date the employee is approved for the scheme. Under this scheme employers are limited to a maximum of 5% of their existing workforce of five employees, whichever is greater. To qualify an employer must employ a person who has been in receipt of Disability Allowance for a continuous period of at least 6 months.

While not a direct payment or tax benefit to you as an employee, the PRSI savings may support the decision of the employer to give you the job.

Schemes not available:

The following schemes are not available to persons in receipt of Disability Allowance.

- Short-Term Enterprise Allowance
- Tús – Community work placement initiative
- Part-time Job Incentive Scheme



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Disability Allowance – FÁS Training Courses (not CE)

Persons on Disability Allowance are allowed to participate on FÁS Training Courses. The Disability Allowance payment is suspended for the duration of the course and a FÁS Training Allowance will be paid instead. Participants will receive a training bonus of €20 per week. When the course is over the person will go back on their Disability Allowance.

Disability Allowance – Secondary Benefits

Entitlement to retain part or all of your secondary benefits may be affected by the source of the additional income. Please contact the INOU for more information on (01) 856 0088.

Disability Allowance – Means Test

The means test to qualify for Disability Allowance is the same as Jobseeker's Allowance (see Chapter 1 ■), with the exception that the capital disregard for Disability Allowance is €50,000.

Disability Allowance – Spouse/Civil Partner/Cohabitant Working

If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant works, is engaged in self-employment or has an income from a course of training or education, their income could affect your Disability Allowance payment - even if you are not claiming for them as a Qualified Adult on your Disability Allowance payment. Their weekly earnings are gross earnings less PRSI, superannuation and union dues.

€20 per day (up to a maximum of €60) from work is deducted from your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant's average weekly earnings and then 60% of the balance is assessed as weekly means. The weekly means is then deducted from the combined total of your personal rate of Disability Allowance and the maximum payment for a Qualified Adult. Income from self-employment is treated differently. [Please contact the INOU for more information on \(01\) 856 0088.](#)

Disability Allowance – Maintenance

Persons receiving maintenance while on Disability Allowance may count up to €95.23 of maintenance against rent/mortgage costs, with half the remaining amount assessed as means. Proof of rent/mortgage payments is required.

Disability Allowance – SWA Payments

The Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) may have the discretion to allow a person to access certain SWA payments, if a case can be made to show that a special need exists, this includes the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, Exceptional Needs Payments and Urgent Needs Payments.

Disability Allowance – Family Income Supplement (FIS)

If a person on Disability Allowance engages in approved rehabilitative work for more than 19 hours per week s/he may apply for the weekly tax free Family Income Supplement payment (see FIS in this Chapter).

Disability Allowance – Residential Care

If you are getting Disability Allowance and go into hospital or residential care you will continue to get your payment as long as you meet the qualifying conditions.

If you were not getting Disability Allowance before living in residential care you may now qualify for Disability Allowance once you meet the qualifying conditions.

Moving from Illness Benefit to Disability Allowance

If you are advised by the Department of Social Protection that you are about to exhaust your entitlement to an Illness Benefit payment, you may be able to apply for Disability Allowance. As this is a means tested payment you will need to check out if your payment will be affected by:

- any rehabilitative employment you are engaged in, *or*
- employment/self-employment your partner or spouse is engaged in.

Illness Benefit is a non-means tested payment, whereas Disability Allowance is means tested. As such you will also need to be aware that the value of any other income, savings, capital, investments or property other than your own

home and how this could affect your entitlement to Disability Allowance. The capital disregard, i.e. money in the bank/building society/post office/credit union, for Disability Allowance is €50,000.

Claiming Disability Allowance

Moving from Illness Benefit to Disability Allowance is not an automatic process – you must make an application for Disability Allowance to the Department of Social Protection which will be subject to a medical assessment to determine if you satisfy the medical requirements. Pending the processing/decision on your application for Disability Allowance you may be able to apply for a weekly Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payment from the Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) based in your local health centre. This is a means tested payment.

Appealing a Decision

If your application for Disability Allowance is refused, and if you feel this decision is incorrect you have the right to appeal the decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. You have the right to ask for an oral hearing, which you can attend with the support of an advocate or support worker. It can take several months to secure a date for an oral hearing. Contact the INOU for more information on (01) 856 0088 or visit our website www.inou.ie.

If you are appealing a decision in relation to your application for Disability Allowance you may be able to apply for a weekly Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payment from the Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer), based in your local health centre, pending the outcome of your appeal. This is a means tested payment.

Moving from Illness Benefit to Invalidity Pension

If you are advised by the Department of Social Protection that you are about to exhaust your entitlement to an Illness Benefit payment you may be able to apply for an Invalidity Pension. This will require that you be medically assessed by a doctor employed by the Department of Social Protection. This doctor will decide whether you are medically unfit for work and qualify on medical grounds for Invalidity Pension.

To qualify you must:

- Have been incapable of work for at least 12 months and be likely to be incapable of work for at least another 12 months (you will probably have been getting Illness Benefit or Disability Allowance during that time), **or**
- Be permanently incapable of work (in certain cases of very serious illness or disability, you can transfer directly from another social welfare payment or from your job to Invalidity Pension).

Appealing a Decision

If your application for Invalidity Pension is refused, and if you feel this decision is incorrect you have the right to appeal the decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. You have the right to ask for an oral hearing, which you can

attend with the support of an advocate or support worker. It can take several months to secure a date for an oral hearing. Contact the INOU for more information on Social Welfare Appeals on (01) 856 0088 or visit our website www.inou.ie.

If you are appealing a decision in relation to your application for Invalidity Pension you may be able to apply for a weekly Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) payment from the Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer), based in your local Health Centre, pending the outcome of your appeal. This is a means tested payment.

ILLNESS BENEFIT (IB) AND WORK

Illness Benefit:

Illness Benefit is a short-term payment for employees insured under Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) who cannot work due to illness. You are entitled to the payment if you are certified as unfit for work due to illness, if you satisfy the Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) conditions and are under age 66.

To qualify for payment of Illness Benefit, you must satisfy **two** conditions:

- (1)** you must have at least 104 weeks of PRSI contributions paid since you first started work

AND EITHER (2a) or (2b)

- (2a)** 39 weeks of PRSI contributions paid or credited in the relevant tax year of which 13 must be **paid contributions**. If you do not have 13 paid contributions in the relevant tax year, then 13 paid in one of the following tax years can be used instead:

- either of the two tax years before the relevant tax year
- or the last complete tax year (before the year in which your claim for Illness Benefit begins)
- or the current tax year. **or**

- (2b)** 26 weeks of PRSI contributions paid in the relevant tax year

and

26 weeks of PRSI contributions paid in the tax year immediately before the relevant tax year.

- The **relevant tax year** is the second last complete tax year before the year in which your claim for Illness Benefit begins. For example:

If your claim begins in:	The relevant tax year is:
2012	2010
2013	2011
2014	2012

- Only PRSI contributions paid at class A, E, H and P count towards Illness Benefit.
- If you are getting long-term Jobseeker's Allowance, Pre-Retirement Allowance, Invalidity Pension, Carer's Allowance or Carer's Benefit, immediately before applying for Illness Benefit, you do not need to have the 13 paid contributions referred to in part **(2a)** above.
- If you were getting Occupational Injury Benefit (OIB) immediately before applying for Illness Benefit you may use the tax year that applied to your OIB claim or the tax year that applies to your Illness Benefit claim, whichever is more beneficial.
- If you have been discharged from the Defence Forces you may claim Illness Benefit. You must send in your discharge papers with your claim.

Rates of Payment:

Personal Allowance	=	€188.00 (maximum rate)
Qualified Adult	=	€124.80 (maximum rate)
Each Qualified Child	=	€29.80 (full rate)

Illness Benefit – Duration of payment

The duration of payment of Illness Benefit will depend on when your illness began and your PRSI contribution record.

— **Before January 2009:** If your claim for Illness Benefit began **before** January 2009 and you had 260 weeks PRSI paid since you first began work, you may be entitled to receive Illness Benefit for as long as you are unfit for work and are under 66. While in receipt of the payment you may be required to undergo medical assessments to determine if you still qualify for the payment on medical grounds.

— **After January 2009:** If your claim for Illness Benefit began **after** January 2009 and you had 260 weeks PRSI paid since you first began work, you may be entitled to receive Illness Benefit for a maximum of 2 years. While in receipt of the payment you may be required to undergo medical assessments to determine if you still qualify for the payment on medical grounds.

— **Less than 260 PRSI Contributions after January 2009:** If you have between 104 and 259 weeks PRSI contributions paid, you may be entitled to claim Illness Benefit for up to 52 weeks.

The Department will contact you before your payment is due to stop, telling you when payment will stop and what your options are.

Illness Benefit – Medical Assessment

During the course of your claim for Illness Benefit, you may be asked to attend a medical assessment by a Medical Assessor for a second opinion as to whether you are incapable of work. The opinion of the Medical Assessor following this assessment is submitted to a Deciding Officer for consideration regarding your continued entitlement to Illness Benefit.

In any case where payment of Illness Benefit is disallowed, you will be notified of the decision and advised of your right to appeal the decision.

Illness Benefit – Tax

Illness Benefit (excluding any increases for child dependants) is considered as income for tax purposes and it is taxed from the first day of payment.

Illness Benefit is paid directly to you without any deduction of income tax. If you are employed, your employer will take your Illness Benefit into account for PAYE purposes. If you are unemployed, Revenue will take account of the amount of Illness Benefit paid to you when they adjust your tax credits or review the tax affairs of your spouse. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Illness Benefit – Returning to Employment

Illness Benefit – Taking up Employment

If you are in receipt of an Illness Benefit payment you can take up employment and may qualify to continue to receive a Social Welfare payment while working – through the new Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme.

Illness Benefit – Rehabilitative Work and exemptions

As of the 13th February 2012 the Department of Social Protection stopped granting exemptions to engage in rehabilitative work for persons in receipt of Illness Benefit. The exemption system has been replaced by the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme.

Illness Benefit – Extensions to work granted before the 13th February 2012:

If you received an exemption to take up employment while in receipt of Illness Benefit before 13th February 2012 you will continue to receive your Illness Benefit payment and your income from employment for the amount of time left on your current Illness Benefit exemption. When this exemption ends you will not be granted any further exemptions, instead, if you wish to continue working, you will need to apply for the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB). This cannot be appealed to the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

Illness Benefit – Community Employment

The way participation on Community Employment affects your entitlement to Illness Benefit changed in Budget 2012.

Illness Benefit – Back to Work Enterprise Allowance: If you wish to pursue self-employment as a full-time option you can apply for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance through the Department of Social Protection if you have been in receipt of Illness Benefit for 3 years or more.

Illness Benefit – Revenue Job Assist: If you have been claiming Illness Benefit for 3 years or more and you are offered a job which is for 30 hours per week or more and which is capable of lasting at least 12 months you may be able to claim additional tax allowances under the Revenue Job Assist scheme.

Illness Benefit – Back to Education Allowance: If you have been claiming Illness Benefit for 2 years you can apply for the Back to Education Allowance.

Schemes not available:

The following schemes are not available to persons in receipt of Illness Benefit.

- Short-Term Enterprise Allowance
- Springboard (Higher Education Programme)
- JobBridge – Internship Scheme
- Tús – Community work placement initiative
- Part-time Job Incentive Scheme



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Illness Benefit – FÁS Training Courses (not CE)

Persons on Illness Benefit are only allowed to participate on FÁS Training Courses with the permission and approval of the Department of Social Protection. This 'exemption' must be received before you can start the FÁS training course. While on the course, if you continue to be entitled to payment of Illness Benefit, the payment will continue. A FÁS Training Allowance is also payable. Participants will not receive the standard training bonus of €20 per week.

Illness Benefit – Secondary Benefits

Entitlement to retain part or all of your secondary benefits may be affected by the amount and source of the additional income.

Illness Benefit – Spouse/Civil Partner/Cohabitant Working

If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant works, is engaged in self-employment or has an income from a course of training or education, their income could affect the Qualified Adult payment you receive for them on your Illness Benefit payment. Please contact the INOU for more information on (01) 856 0088.

Illness Benefit – SWA Payments

The Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) may have the discretion to allow a person to access certain SWA payments, if a case can be made to show that a special need exists, this includes the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, Exceptional Needs Payments and Urgent Needs Payments.

Illness Benefit – Family Income Supplement (FIS)

If you were in receipt of Illness Benefit **before the 13th February 2012** you could qualify for Family Income Supplement if you were engaged in approved rehabilitative work for more than 19 hours per week (see FIS in this chapter).

If you are in receipt of Illness Benefit and seek to engage in employment **after the 13th February 2012** you must apply for the new Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme, which replaced the 'exemption' process on Illness Benefit. Family Income Supplement is not payable with Partial Capacity Benefit.

Illness Benefit – moving to Invalidity Pension

If you are in receipt of an Illness Benefit payment for 12 months and you have a long-term illness or disability which means that you may not be able to work for the rest of your life you may be able to transfer to Invalidity Pension. In certain circumstances applicants for Illness Benefit may qualify for Invalidity

Pension without the need to be in receipt of Illness Benefit for 12 months. Your eligibility will be determined by a medical assessment by the Department of Social Protection. Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

INVALIDITY PENSION (IP) AND WORK

Invalidity Pension

Invalidity Pension is a weekly payment to people who cannot work because of a long-term illness or disability and are covered by social insurance (PRSI).

Normally, you must be getting Illness Benefit for at least 12 months before you claim Invalidity Pension. It may be possible to get Invalidity Pension after a shorter period if you are unlikely to be able to work for the rest of your life because of your illness or disability.

To get Invalidity Pension you must have at least:

- 260 (5 years) paid PRSI contributions since entering social insurance, and
- 48 contributions paid or credited in the last complete tax year before the date of your claim

**Note that only PRSI paid in classes A, E and H count. The last complete tax year is the year before your claim. For example, if you claim Invalidity Pension in 2012, the last complete tax year is 2011.*

Medical criteria

A doctor employed by the Department of Social Protection decides whether you are medically unfit for work and qualify on medical grounds for Invalidity Pension.

To qualify you must:

- Have been incapable of work for at least 12 months and be likely to be incapable of work for at least another 12 months (you will probably have been getting Illness Benefit or Disability Allowance during that time), **or**
- Be permanently incapable of work (in certain cases of very serious illness or disability, you can transfer directly from another social welfare payment or from your job to Invalidity Pension).

Rates of Payment:

Personal Allowance	=	€193.50 (aged under 65)
Qualified Adult	=	€138.10 (maximum – aged under 66)
Each Qualified Child	=	€29.80 (full rate)

Invalidity Pension – Duration of payment

There is no restriction on the amount of time Invalidity Pension is paid. It is payable while you continue to be assessed as unfit for work and where you are unlikely to be able to work for the rest of your life because of your illness or disability.

Invalidity Pension – Medical Assessment

During the course of your claim for Invalidity Pension, you may be asked to attend a medical assessment by a Medical Assessor. The opinion of the Medical Assessor following this assessment is submitted to a Deciding Officer for consideration regarding your continued entitlement to Invalidity Pension.

In any case where payment of Invalidity Pension is disallowed, you will be notified of the decision and advised of your right to appeal against the decision.

Invalidity Pension – Tax

Invalidity Pension (excluding any increases for child dependants) is considered as income for tax purposes and it is taxed from the first day of payment.

Invalidity Pension is paid directly to you without any deduction of income tax. If you are employed, your employer will take your Invalidity Pension into account for PAYE purposes. If you are unemployed, Revenue will take account of the amount of Invalidity Pension paid to you when they adjust your tax credits or review the tax affairs of your spouse. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

Invalidity Pension – Returning to Employment

Invalidity Pension – Taking up Employment

If you are in receipt of an Invalidity Pension payment you can take up employment and may qualify to continue to receive a Social Welfare payment while working – either through the continuation of an existing ‘exemption’ on your Invalidity Pension or through the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB).

Invalidity Pension – Rehabilitative Work and exemptions

As of the 13th February 2012 the Department of Social Protection stopped granting exemptions to engage in rehabilitative work for persons in receipt of Invalidity Pension. The exemption system has been replaced by the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme.

Invalidity Pension – Extensions to work granted before the 13th February 2012: If you received an exemption to take up employment while in receipt of Invalidity Pension before 13th February 2012 you will continue to receive your Invalidity Pension payment and your income from employment for the amount of time left on your current Invalidity Pension exemption. When this exemption ends you will not be granted any further exemptions, instead you will need to apply for the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB). This cannot be appealed to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. This does not apply to Community Employment.

Invalidity Pension – Community Employment

The way participation on Community Employment affects your entitlement to Invalidity Pension changed in Budget 2012.

Invalidity Pension – Back to Work Enterprise Allowance: If you wish to pursue self-employment as a full-time option you can apply for the Back to

Work Enterprise Allowance through the Department of Social Protection if you have been in receipt of Invalidity Pension for 12 months or more.

Invalidity Pension – Revenue Job Assist: If you have been claiming Invalidity Pension for 12 months or more and you are offered a job which is for 30 hours per week or more and which is capable of lasting at least 12 months you may be able to claim additional tax allowances under the Revenue Job Assist scheme.

Invalidity Pension – Back to Education Allowance: If you have been claiming Invalidity Pension you may be able to apply for the Back to Education Allowance.

Schemes not available:

The following schemes are not available to persons in receipt of Invalidity Pension.

- Short-Term Enterprise Allowance
- Part-time Job Incentive Scheme
- JobBridge – Internship Scheme
- Springboard (Higher Education Programme)
- Tús – Community work placement initiative
- Employer Job (PRSI) Exemption Scheme



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Invalidity Pension – FÁS Training Courses (not CE)

Persons on Invalidity Pension are only allowed to participate on FÁS Training Courses with the permission and approval of the Department of Social Protection. This 'exemption' must be received before you can start the FÁS training course. The Invalidity Pension payment continues in full for the duration of the course and a FÁS Training Allowance is also payable. Participants will not receive the standard training bonus of €20 per week.

Invalidity Pension – Secondary Benefits

Entitlement to retain part or all of your secondary benefits may be affected by the amount and source of the additional income. Please contact the INOU for more information on (01) 856 0088.

Invalidity Pension – Spouse/Civil Partner/Cohabitant Working

If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant works, is engaged in self-employment or has an income from a course of training or education, their income could affect the Qualified Adult payment you receive for them on your Invalidity Benefit payment. Please contact the INOU for more information on (01) 856 0088.

Invalidity Pension – SWA Payments

The Department of Social Protection's representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) may have the discretion to allow a person to access certain SWA payments, if a case can be made to show that a special need exists, this includes the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, Exceptional Needs Payments and Urgent Needs Payments.

Invalidity Pension – Family Income Supplement (FIS)

If you were in receipt of Invalidity Pension **before the 13th February 2012** you

could qualify for Family Income Supplement if you were engaged in approved rehabilitative work for more than 19 hours per week (see FIS in this chapter).

If you are in receipt of Invalidity Pension and seek to engage in employment **after the 13th February 2012** you must transfer to the new Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme, which replaced the 'exemption' process on Invalidity Pension. You cannot apply for Family Income Supplement (FIS) while in receipt of a payment under the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme.

PARTIAL CAPACITY BENEFIT (PCB)

The new Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) replaces the previous **exemption** arrangements where people on Illness Benefit and Invalidity Pension could get permission to work part-time (known as an exemption) for rehabilitative or therapeutic purposes and keep their Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension payment.

Persons in receipt of Disability Allowance are not required to take up the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) if they wish to take up rehabilitative work.

To qualify for Partial Capacity Benefit you need to be currently getting either:

- Illness Benefit (for a minimum of 6 months)
- Invalidity Pension (no minimum period)

You may not work until you have received written approval to do so from the Department of Social Protection. You should also get the approval of your doctor before taking up employment.

Partial Capacity Benefit – Hours, Earnings and Work

There is no restriction on the amount of money you can earn or number of hours you can work on this scheme. You can also qualify for Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) if you are seeking to become self-employed.

Unlike the previous rehabilitative exemption process, there is no requirement that the work you do has to be for rehabilitative or therapeutic purposes.

Partial Capacity Benefit – Community Employment

Persons in receipt of Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension cannot seek to claim Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) while participating on Community Employment

Partial Capacity Benefit – FÁS Training Courses

Persons in receipt of Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension are not required to apply for Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) when seeking to participate on a FÁS full-time training course where a FÁS trainee allowance is paid. However, they must apply for and receive permission to engage in the FÁS training course before starting the training course.

Partial Capacity Benefit – taking up employment

–Before the 13th February 2012

If you are in receipt of Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension and you received permission from the Department of Social Protection to engage in rehabilitative employment before the 13th February 2012 your current

exemption to engage in rehabilitative employment will not be affected until your permission comes up for review. When your current exemption expires you will no longer use the exemption process to engage in employment. Under the new system you will only have the option of applying for Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB).

–After the 13th February 2012

If you are in receipt of Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension and you applied for permission from the Department of Social Protection to engage in rehabilitative employment after the 13th February 2012 you will only have the option to engage in employment under the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme.

Partial Capacity Benefit – Approval

You will require the permission of the Department of Social Protection before you take up or begin employment under the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme. You may be required to undertake a medical assessment to determine the restrictions on your capacity for work. The approval process is based on the medical assessment undertaken at the time of application; if the application is successful you will be transferred to the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme immediately. If there is any delay in changeover between Illness Benefit/ Invalidity Pension and the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme you may qualify for a Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment (SWA) subject to a means test – see Chapter 2 ■ for information on Supplementary Welfare Allowance payments.

Partial Capacity Benefit – Transferring payments

If you take up employment under this scheme your Illness Benefit / Invalidity Pension payment will be replaced by the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB), you will no longer be in receipt of your previous Illness Benefit / Invalidity Pension payment. However, periods spent on the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme will be counted as ‘qualifying’ periods when assessing overall time spent on Illness Benefit / Invalidity Pension payments.

Partial Capacity Benefit – Starting Work

You should apply, and receive approval for, the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme before you start work.

If you find that it might be necessary to take up employment before you receive formal approval for Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme, because of the start date of the job, you should **contact** the Department of Social Protection to discuss the matter. Under certain circumstances, it may be possible to take up employment before the formal approval has been granted. In such circumstances you will not receive any Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) payment until the application has been formally approved, when any arrears accrued will be paid.

Partial Capacity Benefit – Voluntary Participation

Participation on the Partial Capacity Benefit scheme is voluntary. It is our understanding that you will not be required or obliged to consider participation on Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme in order to continue to qualify to receive your Illness Benefit / Invalidity Pension payment.

Partial Capacity Benefit – Secondary Benefits

If you were entitled to Free Travel or Island Allowance, while in receipt of Invalidity Pension, you can keep them if you qualify for Partial Capacity Benefit. If you were getting the Household Benefits Package (electricity/gas, telephone and television) you can also retain it, subject to a means test after two years. Your entitlement to Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement may be affected by the combination of your Partial Capacity Benefit and your income from employment, and may be affected if you work over 30 hours per week.

Partial Capacity Benefit – Medical Assessment

When you apply for the Partial Capacity Benefit scheme a Medical Assessor of the Department of Social Protection will assess the restriction on your capacity for work. This may require you to attend a medical assessment. You should include all appropriate medical evidence with your application form. If you qualify for the Partial Capacity Benefit scheme, you will not be required to send in medical certificates.

Qualifying conditions for this scheme, and other schemes, change from time to time. [Contact the INOU on \(01\) 856 0088 for the latest information on qualifying conditions for this scheme.](#)

Medical Assessment	% of your personal rate of Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension payment
Mild	0 (no payment applicable)*
Moderate	50
Severe	75
Profound	100

***Mild Restriction:** If you apply for the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) and your restriction is assessed as mild you will not qualify for the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB). In addition, your continued eligibility to Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension will also be reviewed.

Appealing a Medical Assessment: The level of restriction on your capacity for work is directly linked to your rate of payment on the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme. If you are unhappy with the level of restriction of capacity assessed by the Departments Medical Assessor you have the right to appeal that finding to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. See Chapter 1 ■ for more information on Social Welfare Appeals or [contact the INOU on \(01\) 856 0088.](#)

Partial Capacity Benefit – Rates of payment

Partial Capacity Benefit is made up of a personal rate for you and may include increases for your qualified adult and qualified child(ren). The personal rate of payment is based on the assessment of your restriction on capacity for work and on your Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension. The conditions for payment of an increase for a qualified child and/or qualified children remain the same as those that applied to your Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension claim.

Personal Rate

Medical Assessment	Person previously getting Illness Benefit at the maximum personal rate €188.00	Person aged under 65 and previously getting Invalidity Pension at the maximum personal rate €193.50
Moderate	€ 94.00	€ 96.75
Severe	€141.00	€145.13
Profound	€188.00	€193.50

Qualified Dependents	Full-rate	Half-rate
Qualified Adult	€124.80 (maximum rate of payment)	
Qualified Child	€29.80	€14.90

Partial Capacity Benefit – Duration of Payment

The duration of payment on the Partial Capacity Benefit (PRB) scheme will depend on the Illness/Invalidity payment you are currently in receipt of:

— Illness Benefit before 2009

If you have been in receipt of Illness Benefit prior to January 2009 there is no restriction on the amount of time you can remain on the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme.

— Illness Benefit after 2009

If you qualified for Illness Benefit after January 2009 your entitlement to Illness Benefit is limited to a maximum of 2 years. If you take up employment under the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme the time you have already spent on Illness Benefit prior to taking up the PCB will be counted in assessing your entitlement to participate on the scheme i.e. if you have been on Illness Benefit for 12 months you would only have an entitlement to participate on the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme for another 12 months, the combined period equalling 2 years.

— Invalidity Pension

There is no restriction on the amount of time you can remain on the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme.

Please Note: You may be subject to ongoing medical reviews/assessment while on the PCB. The outcome of such reviews/assessments may affect your continued entitlement to remain on the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme and could also affect any underlying entitlement to return to an Illness Benefit / Invalidity Pension payment in the future.

Partial Capacity Benefit – mild restriction

If you apply for the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) and are assessed as having a 'mild' restriction on your ability to work you will not qualify for the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) and your continued eligibility to Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension will also be reviewed. If you are unhappy with the level of

restriction of capacity assessed by the departments Medical Assessor you have the right to appeal that finding to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. See Chapter 1 ■ for more information on Social Welfare Appeals or contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Partial Capacity Benefit – leaving the scheme

If you take up employment under this scheme you can return to your previous Illness Benefit / Invalidity Pension payment if you continue to satisfy the qualifying conditions of the payment.

You will be required to provide a P45 from your employer and a letter stating that you have ceased employment. You do not need to provide details or information in relation to your reasons for leaving employment, however if you have left employment and removed yourself from the PCB because your medical condition has become worse you should advise the Department of Social Protection of this change to your circumstances.

If you leave the PCB scheme and requalify for Illness Benefit, your Illness Benefit payment could be lower than the Illness Benefit you receive before you participated in the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) scheme. This reduced payment may occur because of reduced PRSI contributions in the Relevant Tax Year / Governing Contribution Year – see Chapter 1 ■ for more information on the Relevant Tax Year / Governing Contribution Year.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Employers wishing to employ persons with disabilities may take advantage of the following supports:

Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS)

This scheme, operated by FÁS, provides financial incentives to employers, outside the public sector, to employ disabled people who work more than 20 hours per week.

A person on the Wage Subsidy Scheme is subject to the same conditions of employment as other employees. These conditions include PRSI contributions, annual leave, tax deductions and the going rate for the job.

Subsidies available through this scheme are structured under 3 separate strands and employers can benefit under one or all, simultaneously.

Strand 1 subsidy is a general subsidy for any perceived productivity shortfall in excess of 20% for a disabled person who is an existing employee, in comparison to a non disabled peer. An employee must work a minimum of 21 hours per week up to a maximum of 39 hours per week. The rate of subsidy is €5.30 per hour and is based on the number of hours worked, giving a total annual subsidy available of €10,748 per annum based on a 39 hour week.

Strand 2 applies where a company employs more than two disabled people. The company can avail of a grant to cover the additional supervisory, management and other work based costs. This top-up is based on the overall

number of disabled employees employed and will range on a sliding scale from an additional 10% of wage subsidy for 3 to 6 disabled employees to a maximum of 50% of wage subsidy for 23+ disabled employees.

Strand 3 is where an employer employs 30 or more disabled workers. The employer can avail of a grant of €30,000 per annum towards the expense of employing an Employment Assistance Officer.

This programme is not available to the Public Sector as defined by the Disability Act 2005.

Supported Employment Programme (SEP)

The Supported Employment Programme provides additional assistance for disabled persons to find and obtain employment. Support is provided through a range of organisations and included among the supports are Job Coaches who assist disabled persons and their employers. Supported Employment has four main phases:

- Phase A: A needs assessment
- Phase B: Job sourcing and development
- Phase C: Matching the jobseeker with a suitable employer
- Phase D: Aftercare and follow-up

There are a range of grants available for people with disabilities and employers including:

— **Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant:** This scheme is paid to assist employers to make the workplace more accessible to persons with disabilities. It is also available to self-employed people with disabilities. This grant is restricted to the private sector and the maximum award is normally €6,348.70. This scheme is administered by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and applications should be made at your local DSP office.

— **Job Interview Interpreter Grant:** Under its Job Interview Interpreter Grant Scheme FÁS will normally pay a set fee for a three hour period to provide for the services of an interpreter to support speech or hearing impaired persons who wish to attend job interviews. Travel costs for the interpreter are paid at a fixed rate.

— **Personal Reader Grant:** The Personal Reader Grant (PRG) enables blind or partially sighted people to employ a personal reader to assist them with work related reading. A fee per hour in line with the national minimum wage can be made for a maximum of 640 hours per annum. [Contact your local DSP office, Local Employment Service \(LES\) or the INOU on \(01\) 856 0088.](#)

CARER'S PAYMENTS AND WORK

If you are looking after someone who is in need of support because of age, physical or learning disability, or illness (including mental illness) you may qualify for a Carers Payment. There are two types of Carers Payments; **Carers Allowance** and **Carers Benefit**.

CARER'S ALLOWANCE (CA)

Carer's Allowance is a means tested payment that can be paid to carers on low incomes who look after people who need full-time care and attention. If you are looking after more than one person you may be entitled to an additional 50% of the maximum rate of Carer's Allowance each week. If you qualify for the Allowance, you may also qualify for the free Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Natural Gas/Bottled Gas allowances/Free TV licence/Free Telephone rental allowance) and a Free Travel pass. There is no Qualified Adult payment with the Carers Allowance.

Carer's Allodwance – Rates of Payment:

Aged under 66, caring for 1 person	= €204.00
Aged under 66, caring for 2 or more persons	= €306.00
Aged 66 or over and caring for 1 person	= €239.00
Aged 66+, caring for 2 or more persons	= €358.50
Qualified Adult = There is no Qualified Adult Payment on Carers Allowance.	
Qualified Child*:	Full-Rate = €29.80
	Half-Rate = €14.90

**You may claim a full-rate increase in your payment for a child dependant if you are a carer and are single, widowed, separated or a civil partner who is not living with the other civil partner. You may claim a half-rate increase in your payment for a child dependant if you are a carer and are living with your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant*

Carer's Allowance – Means Test

The means test for the Carer's Allowance involves assessing your income from savings, investments, property (excluding your home) and your spouse/civil partners/cohabitants income. For a single person claiming the Carer's Allowance the amount of weekly income that is not taken into account is €332.50. For married couples, civil partners or cohabitants, (except for social welfare payments from other states, to which special rules apply) the first €665 of their combined weekly income is disregarded.

Carer's Allowance – other Social Welfare payments

If you are getting certain social welfare payments and you are providing full time care and attention for 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.

Carer's Allowance – half rate payment

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 a half-rate Carer's Allowance as well.

Half-rate Carer's Allowance is **not** payable with the following Social Welfare Payments – Jobseeker's Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance, Family Income Supplement, Back to Education Allowance, Carer's Benefit or Supplementary Welfare Allowance. [Contact the INOU for more information on \(01\) 856 0088.](#)

Carer's Allowance – Qualified Adult payment

If you are being claimed for as a Qualified Adult on your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant's social welfare payment and you are providing full time care for another person, you may apply for half-rate Carer's Allowance in your own right and your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant may retain the full Qualified Adult payment for you on their Social Welfare payment.

Carer's Allowance – FÁS training courses

A training bonus of €20 per week is payable to person's that have been receipt of Carer's Allowance for 12 months or more prior to participating on a FÁS training course.

Carer's Allowance – Community Employment

If you are in receipt of a Carers Allowance payment you cannot participate on a Community Employment scheme directly from your Carer's Allowance payment. If you were in receipt of Carer's Allowance this can count towards the one-year eligibility period to qualify for Community Employment, but

- your caring responsibilities must have ceased, **and**
- you must currently be in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit (JB), Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) or the One Parent Family Payment (OPFP).

If you qualify to participate on a Community Employment (CE) scheme after the 16th January 2012, having been on Carer's Allowance for more than one year and you are currently in receipt of a qualifying Social Welfare payment, your Community Employment scheme payment will replace your existing social welfare payment. You will not receive a payment on CE and a Social Welfare payment.

CARER'S BENEFIT (CB)

Carer's Benefit is the payment made to insured people **who leave the work place** to care for a person or persons in need of full time care and attention.

To qualify you must satisfy a number of conditions:

PRSI Contribution Conditions:

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

- 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 Relevant Tax Year before that.

The contributions do not have to be Class A. Instead, all employment

contributions count (except Class S (self-employed) contributions). 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 2012, the Relevant Tax Year is 2010.

Employment Conditions:

You have been in employment for at least 8 weeks in the previous 26 weeks before becoming a carer. You must have worked for a minimum of 16 hours per week or 32 hours per fortnight.

You give up work to be a full-time Carer (but you are still allowed to take up employment/self-employment/training/education for up to 15 hours per week with the approval of the Department of Social Protection)

Carer's Benefit – Rates of Payment:

Aged under 66, caring for 1 person	= €205.00
Aged under 66, caring for 2 or more persons	= €307.50
Qualified Adult = There is no Qualified Adult Payment on Carers Benefit.	
Qualified Child*:	Full-Rate = €29.80
	Half-Rate = €14.90

** 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 Qualified Child Increase 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 increase 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 Social Protection, you will each get a half-rate increase.*

Carer's Benefit – Means Test

Carer's Benefit is not means tested. Any savings, investments or property that you might own will not affect your rate of payment on Carer's Benefit. Earned income from employment must not be more than €332.50 per week.

Carer's Benefit – Duration of payment

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.

Carer's Benefit – Tax

Carers Benefit is a taxable source of income and should be advised to your local tax office. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

Carer's Benefit – other Social Welfare payments

You cannot claim Carers Benefit and another Social Welfare payment at the same time. There is no half-rate or reduced rate of Carers Benefit payable with any other Social Welfare payment.

Carer's Benefit – Community Employment

If you are in receipt of a Carers Benefit payment you cannot participate on a Community Employment scheme. Being in receipt of Carer's Benefit does not count towards the one-year eligibility period to qualify for Community Employment as applies to Carers' Allowance.

Carer's Benefit – Leave from Work

The Carer's Leave Act 2001 allows employees to leave their employment temporarily to provide full-time care for someone in need of full-time care and attention. Carers Leave is unpaid leave. The minimum period of leave is 13 weeks and the maximum period is 104 weeks.

- Carers leave is unpaid leave from employment
- You do not have to qualify for Carers Benefit to apply for Carers Leave
- You must have been in employment with your employer for 12 months or more to apply for Carers Leave
- You must give your employer at least 6 week's notice of your intention to take carer's leave
- ***You cannot be dismissed*** for exercising your right to carer's leave.

If you are on carer's leave, you must give notice in writing to your employer 4 weeks before the date you will return to work, that you intend to return to work. You are to be treated as if you had been in work during your period of carer's leave except that you are not entitled to pay while on Carers Leave. You are only entitled to annual leave and public holidays in respect of the first 13 weeks of carer's leave.

Carers Payments – Part-time Work / Self-Employment

Persons in receipt of Carers Allowance and Carers Benefit can engage in part-time employment or self-employment and continue to receive a Carers payment. The carer must have permission from the Department of Social Protection before taking up any work.

Both Carer's Benefit and Allowance:

The following is allowed, if during the carer's absence, adequate provision of care has been arranged for the person being cared for:

- voluntary or community work for up to 15 hours a week
- limited self-employment in your own home (any earnings will be assessed as means – Carer's Allowance only)
- employment outside your home for up to 15 hours a week (any earnings will be assessed as means – Carer's Allowance only)
- Education or training courses up to 15 hours per week.

Carer's Benefit only:

You cannot earn more than €332.50 per week from employment. [For more information contact the INOU on \(01\) 856 0088](#)

FAMILY INCOME SUPPLEMENT (FIS)

Family Income Supplement (FIS) is a weekly tax-free payment for families, including one-parent families, at work on low pay. The Department of Social Protection administers this payment.

To be entitled to FIS:

- You must be an employee, you cannot qualify for FIS if you are only self-employed.
- Have at least one qualified child i.e. a child under the age of 18 or aged 18-22 if in full-time education, who is normally living with you and being supported by you.
- Be working for at least 19 hours a week or 38 hours every fortnight and not getting Jobseeker's Benefit or Allowance. Both partners' hours can be added together to make up the 19 hours. Hours from self-employment are not counted.
- Expect to be employed for at least three months.
- Satisfy a means test.

FIS Means Test – what is counted as means

The means test to qualify for FIS will count all of your income (including rental income from property) and your partner's income. The following payments are counted:

- Your assessable earnings and your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant's assessable earnings. (Assessable earnings are gross pay minus tax, employee PRSI, Universal Social Charge and superannuation.) Income from working as a home help is included for new claims from January 2012 and for existing claims on renewal.
- Any extra income you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant have from employment (such as pay for overtime, bonuses, allowances or commission).
- Any income you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant may have from self-employment.
- Income from occupational pensions.
- Income you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant may have including social welfare payments.
- Rental income from the letting of property or land (the capital value is not assessed).
- It was announced in Budget 2012 that 1/3 of income received from a carer's payments (Carer's Benefit and Carer's Allowance) will be counted as means when calculating entitlement to Family Income Supplement in 2012.

- Income from working as a home help for the HSE will be assessed for all new FIS claims from January 2012.

The following payments are not counted:

- Guardian's payments, Supplementary Welfare Allowance, Domiciliary Care allowance, Foster Child Allowance, Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement.
- 2/3 of Carer's Allowance and 2/3 of Carer's Benefit is not counted in 2012.

Other income that is not counted includes: income from a charitable organisation (Unless from employment), unearned income (for example interest on savings) and income from providing accommodation to students studying Irish in Gaeltacht areas under a scheme administered by the Minister for the Gaeltacht.

Family Size	Department's Net Income Guidelines
One child	€506
Two children	€602
Three children	€703
Four children	€824
Five children	€950
Six children	€1,066
Seven children	€1,202
Eight or more children	€1,298

FIS Means Test – How much you can get

If your net (after tax and deductions) wage is less than the set figure for your family size, you will receive 60% of the difference. See the following example:

Working and claiming FIS

Conor and Niamh have 4 children. Conor is employed over 19 hours and earns €250 per week net. If Conor applies for a FIS payment based on his family size and net wages his new total household income is calculated as follows:

Set FIS rate for family of four children	€824.00
Less Conor's Income	- €250.00
Income Difference	€574.00
Weekly FIS (60% of €574)	€344.40
Plus Conor's earnings	+ €250.00
Total household income	€594.40

FIS and your Partner claiming a Jobseeker's payment

If your partner is claiming a Jobseeker's payment, but is not claiming for you as a Qualified Adult, you can claim FIS if you are working and satisfy the normal qualification criteria see above. Any FIS payment received may affect your partners Jobseeker's payment.

Important points to remember

- FIS is not taxable.
- FIS is paid for 52 weeks while you remain employed for at least 19 hours per week (or 38 hours per fortnight). This includes those on the Job Initiative scheme, the Community Services Programme (formerly the Social Economy Programme) and Part-Time Job Incentive Scheme.
- If your earnings increase you will still retain FIS for the rest of the year.
- A person who job shares and works at least 38 hours over a two-week period and fulfils all the other conditions can also apply for FIS.
- Where both spouses/partners are working, their hours can be added together to total 19 hours for the household to qualify for FIS. Hours from self employment are not included.
- The spouse/partner with the greatest income is the person who makes the application for FIS
- If you have another child the FIS payment will be increased.
- The minimum FIS payment is €20 per week
- You cannot claim FIS if you are self-employed or on Community Employment
- At the end of the 52 weeks you should re-apply for FIS if you think you are still eligible. Always check – you may be losing out on a payment.

FIS – Maternity Benefit

Under the Maternity Protection Act 1994, a woman who qualifies for Maternity Benefit is entitled to claim FIS, subject to the income limits. Your income must be less than the income limit for your family size. If you are claiming Maternity Benefit your average weekly earnings, from employment, are worked out by adding together the 26 weeks of Maternity Benefit and your earnings from work for the previous 26 weeks and then dividing the total figure by 52.

Your FIS claim will then be paid for one year from the date of application for your Maternity Benefit payment. You are not entitled to continue to claim FIS if you take additional unpaid maternity or adoptive leave or if you do not return to work following maternity or adoptive leave.

FIS – Reduced Working hours/Losing your Job

– **If your pay from work is reduced** your Family Income Supplement (FIS) payment will stay the same. It will not increase. However, when your FIS payment ends you can re-apply giving details of your new reduced income. (FIS is usually paid for 52 weeks. At the end of the 52 weeks, you can re-apply for FIS).

– **If the number of hours you work each week is reduced** to below 19 hours (38 hour per fortnight) you are no longer entitled to FIS. You should notify the FIS section if your hours fall below the minimum requirement.

– **If you lose your job** you are no longer entitled to FIS. You must notify the FIS section in the Department of Social Protection on (043) 334 0000 or Lo-call 1890 92 77 70.

FIS – Maintenance

A separated parent can apply for FIS once he or she meets the qualifying conditions and:

- Is living with the children or
- Is wholly maintaining the ex-spouse, ex-civil partner or ex-cohabitant with whom the children are living
- Only one FIS payment can be made for a family

‘Wholly maintaining’ means that maintenance paid by you, the FIS applicant, must be the sole income of your ex-spouse, ex-civil partner or ex-cohabitant.

FIS – Paying maintenance

If you are a separated parent and paying maintenance you may qualify for FIS. To qualify you must be wholly maintaining the parent with whom the children are living. Only one FIS payment can be made for a family, the parent to whom you are paying maintenance must not be getting FIS.

If you are paying maintenance as a result of a court order or legally binding agreement for a second family, the amount of that maintenance payment will not be deducted from the income to be assessed for FIS.

FIS – Receiving maintenance

If you are receiving maintenance, the total amount of your maintenance payment will be assessed as income for FIS. Only one FIS payment can be made for a family, the parent from whom you are getting maintenance must not be getting FIS. A parent getting maintenance for a qualified child will also have that maintenance assessed for FIS.

WORK EXPERIENCE

A number of schemes exist to support unemployed people, and those in receipt of certain other Social Welfare payments, to return to work.

- Community Employment (CE)
- JobBridge - National Internship Scheme
- Work Placement Programme (WPP)
- Tús – Community Workplace Initiative
- Community Services Programme (CSP)
- Job Initiative (JI) – closed to new applicants

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT (CE)

Community Employment schemes are Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMP's) supported by the Department of Social Protection (DSP). These schemes provide training and work experience, primarily to long-term unemployed people and those on the One Parent Family Payment, with some

other groups of people also being eligible. Those on CE work for an average of 19.5 hours per week (or 39 hours per fortnight).

Local sponsors – community groups, local authorities or non-profit companies working in the voluntary sector or local authorities – manage CE projects. CE is divided into two options that have different eligibility rules and conditions. The type of work varies considerably from project to project. Jobs are advertised through the DSP and FÁS websites, LES offices and local Job Clubs. You can apply for a CE position through your local DSP Employment Services office, LES or Job Club. Visit www.fas.ie or www.welfare.ie for further details.

CE – Important Changes in 2012

One Parent Families and Disability Payments

The changes to qualification and continued eligibility for Community Employment for those in receipt of certain payments are outlined as follows:

- One Parent Family Payment
- Disability Allowance
- Illness Benefit
- Invalidity Pension

New Participants on Community Employment:

From 16th January 2012 **new** participants on Community Employment (CE) schemes **will not** be able to claim another Social Welfare payment while on CE. This will affect new clients in receipt of:

- One Parent Family Payment
- Disability Allowance
- Deserted Wife's Benefit
- Invalidity Pension
- Widow(er)s Pension
- Blind Pension
- Illness Benefit

The definition of 'new participant' is someone who has not participated on CE in the preceding 12 months. The standard additional €20 per week CE Participation bonus paid to all Community Employment participants will be paid to all new participants.

On completion of participation on a CE scheme, you can re-apply for your original Social Welfare payment. Any such application will be treated as a 'new' application and will be subject to the rules and guidelines of that Social Welfare payment at that time.

Existing Participants:

If you were participating on a Community Employment scheme **immediately before the 16th January 2012**, and you were in receipt of either the One Parent Family Payment, Disability Allowance, Deserted Wife's Benefit, Widow(ers) Pension, Disability Allowance, Blind Pension, Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension, you will continue to receive that Social Welfare payment in addition to your Community Employment scheme payment until your current Community Employment contract expires or you leave the CE scheme voluntarily.

This 'double payment' can continue until December 2014 at most, subject to your continued qualification for your existing Community Employment position as an existing applicant. December 2014 is the final cut-off date for all persons getting a social welfare payment and a CE scheme payment together.

You will only receive the child payment for any qualifying children on your Social Welfare payment; you will not receive any child payment on Community Employment.

CE Extensions – After 16th January 2012.

If you obtained an extension to your Community Employment Scheme **after 16th January 2012**, and you were in receipt of either the One Parent Family Payment, Disability Allowance, Blind Pension, Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension, you will continue to receive your Social Welfare payment and your Community Employment payment for the duration of your 'extended' Community Employment Scheme until you exit CE or exhaust your CE participation limits or reach the final date for the ending of all dual payments or December 2014, whichever occurs first.

- You will only receive the child payment for any qualifying children on your Social Welfare Payment, you will not receive any child payment on Community Employment.
- When you finish your CE scheme you can seek to reclaim your original Social Welfare payment. You will be subject to the qualifying terms and conditions of the payment at the time of application, and may be treated as a 'new applicant'.
- If you were continuously in receipt of the One Parent Family Payment and participating on Community Employment you will not be treated as a new applicant for the OPFP, and will continue to receive the OPFP subject to having a qualifying child based on the date of your original application for OPFP. You will not be subject to the new maximum age rules for qualifying children.

Transferring between CE Schemes

If you seek to transfer directly from your existing Community Employment scheme to a different Community Employment scheme **after 16th January 2012** you will be treated as an 'existing participant' on Community Employment. This means that your entitlement to receive a Social Welfare payment in addition to your Community Employment payment will continue if you already qualify for this.

- You will only receive the child payment for any qualifying children on your Community Employment payment.
- When you finish your CE scheme, you can seek to reclaim the original Social Welfare payment you received before you took up Community Employment. Your entitlement to that payment may be treated as a 'new' claim and will be subject to the qualifying terms and conditions of the payment at the time of application.

One-Parent Family Payment and Deserted Wife's Benefit

If you had to transfer from Deserted Wife's Benefit to One-Parent Family Payment to be accepted as a participant on a Community Employment Scheme, you can now apply to have your entitlement to Deserted Wife's Benefit restored. While Deserted Wife's Benefit is closed to new applicants, it is still paid to those who had qualified for it before 2 January 1997.

The maximum weekly rate of payment for Deserted Wife's Benefit is higher than the maximum weekly rate of payment for One-Parent Family Payment. If you qualify to have your entitlement to Deserted Wife's Benefit restored you may also be due arrears.

Child Payments

From the 20th February 2012 persons in receipt of either a One Parent Family Payment, Deserted Wife's Benefit, Widow(ers) Pension and a Community Employment payment will only receive one child payment for each qualifying child. This will be paid as part of the Social Welfare payment. You will not receive any additional or 'second' child payment on your Community Employment scheme payment.

CE – Part-Time Integration Option

The objective of the Part-time Integration Option is to help ensure that participants find a job or enter full time training/education normally after one year on Community Employment. If you decide to take a place on this option you may qualify for one year on the scheme.

New Participants on Community Employment:

Since the 16th January 2012 new participants on Community Employment (CE) schemes **will not** be able to claim another Social Welfare payment at the same time as their participation on a Community Employment Scheme. This applies to all Social Welfare payments

Who is eligible

- Anyone 25 years of age or over and currently in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance/Jobseeker's Benefit or One Parent Family Payment for 12 months or more.
- Anyone 25 years of age or over in receipt of either Widows/Widowers pension (Contributory or Non-Contributory), Farm Assist or Deserted Wife's Benefit for 12 months or more.
- Anyone 25 years of age or over who is a Qualified Adult Dependant of an eligible person who is currently in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance, Jobseeker's Benefit or Farm Assist for 12 months or more may avail of the Spousal Swap Option. (This does not apply to a Qualified Adult Dependant of those on Disability Allowance, Illness Benefit, Invalidity Pension or Blind Pension).
- All Refugees (Convention and Programme) aged 18 years and over, as authenticated by the Department of Justice and Equality (i.e. Green Card or Garda Registration Certificate with Stamp 4) without the requisite number of weeks in receipt of payments from the DSP.

- Travellers of any age, unemployed and in receipt of JA/JB for any period, or OPFP for one year or more. For Travellers aged 16 to 17 years, a minimum of 12 months spent in a Travellers Training Workshop will suffice for eligibility.
- Persons aged 18 years or over based on evidence of an appropriate referral following an appropriate assessment of the applicant in the context of the National Rehabilitation Framework protocols.
- Ex-offenders, aged 18 years or over, who are referred by the Probation Service. Also, Ex-offenders aged 18 and over not referred by the Probation Service and in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit for 1 year or more. Time spent as a prisoner is regarded as reckonable when considering duration of unemployment.
- Persons aged 18 years or over inhabiting the off-shore islands
- Persons aged 25 years or over who were in receipt of Carer's Allowance, but caring responsibilities must have ceased and the person must currently be in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance, Jobseeker's Benefit or One Parent Family Payment for a combined total of 12 months or more.

CE – Part-Time Job Option

On the Part-time Job Option you may be eligible to work up to three years compared to the standard 1-year available to other participants. The 3-year option recognises the need to provide access to a part-time placement for extended periods for older persons who have been unable to secure regular employment for some time. If you decide to take a place on this option you may be taken on for one year initially and depending on your work performance and availability of places, you can be re-engaged for further periods, up to a maximum of 3 years subject to approval by Department.

New Participants on Community Employment:

Since the 16th January 2012 new participants on Community Employment (CE) schemes **will not** be able to claim another Social Welfare payment at the same time as their participation on a Community Employment Scheme. This applies to all Social Welfare payments

Who is eligible?

Eligibility for CE Part-Time Job Option is the same as for the CE Part-Time Integration Option with the exception of the following; that the age requirement is 35 years of age rather than 25:

- Persons aged 35 years or over who were in receipt of Carer's Allowance, but caring responsibilities must have ceased and the person must currently be in receipt of either Jobseeker's Allowance, Jobseeker's Benefit or One Parent Family Payment for a combined total of 3 years or more.
- Anyone 35 years of age or over who is a Qualified Adult Dependant of an eligible person who is currently in receipt of either JA, JB, or Farm Assist for 3 years or more may avail of the Spousal Swap option. (This does not apply to Qualified Adult Dependents of those on Disability Allowance, Illness Benefit, Invalidity Pension or Blind Pension (Spousal Swap).

- Travellers of 18 years or over in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance, Jobseeker's Benefit or One Parent Family Payment for one year or more. For Travellers aged 16 to 17 years, a minimum of 12 months spent on a Travellers Training Workshop will suffice for eligibility.
- Ex-offenders aged 35 years or over, who are referred by the Probation Service. Also, ex-offenders aged 35 and over not referred by the Probation Service and in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit for 3 years or more. Time spent as a prisoner is regarded as reckonable when considering duration of unemployment.
- Persons 35 years of age or over in receipt of either Disability Allowance or Blind Pension or Invalidity Pension for any period or Illness Benefit for 6 months or more.

The maximum rates of pay on CE projects are:

Personal Allowance (CE Single Rate)	€208.00
Qualified Adult Dependant (at Maximum Rate)	€124.80
Each Qualified Child (at Maximum Rate)	€29.80
Each half-rate Qualified Child (at Maximum Rate)	€14.90

If the actual (means-assessed) social welfare payment received per week is €188.00 or less, then the maximum CE payment will be €208.00 regardless of dependants.

If the actual (means-assessed) social welfare payment received per week is greater than €188.00, then the CE payment will match that actual payment amount plus a €20.00 CE participation bonus.

Important Points to remember

- If you are earning less than €352 per week you are exempt from paying PRSI – but a PRSI contribution is made by your employer. If you earn more than €352, there is a PRSI disregard on the first €127 you earn per week. PRSI is paid at a rate of 4% on all weekly earnings over €127.
- The Universal Social Charge does not count income from Community Employment as part of your 'gross' income.
- To make up your qualifying time for Community Employment you can combine a period of time spent on a recognised training, education or employment programme. Time spent in prison may also count as time unemployed.
- The capping of participation on CE, as outlined below, does not apply to periods spent on CE before April 3rd, 2000
- Lifetime participation for those participating on the CE, is 'capped' at three years overall for those aged under 55 and at six years overall for those aged 55 and over (with the exception of the cases outlined below).
- Lifetime participation for those participating on the CE and qualifying as a result of receipt of a DSP disability linked benefit, is 'capped' at four years overall for those aged under 55 and at seven years overall for those 55 and over.

- The normal 'waiting period' for those wanting to repeat a one-year term on CE is 12 months. The person must be in receipt of a Community Employment qualifying payment during this 12 month period.
- If the income of your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant changes after you start the CE Scheme you will continue to receive the qualified adult and child dependent rates when you first went on to the scheme. If you have additional children you may receive a further qualified child payment.

If you finish a scheme and apply for a jobseeker's payment you can choose the payment of most benefit to you, either long-term Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit. If you choose Jobseeker's Benefit, you will lose entitlement to long-term secondary benefits such as the Fuel Allowance.

What about my Secondary Benefits?

Existing Participants on Community Employment

If you are on Community Employment and qualify to retain a Social Welfare payment, it is unlikely you will receive the Back To School Clothing and Footwear Allowance. Fuel Allowance may be payable on CE to Jobseeker clients only, if the Department of Social Protection confirm eligibility to this payment.

- **Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement:** If you are receiving Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement, the combination of income from CE and any Social Welfare payment will also affect your Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement,. Please see Chapter 2 for information on Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement.
- **Medical Card:** You will keep your medical card while on CE no matter how much you earn.
- **Fuel Allowance:** Those in receipt of CE and the One Parent Family Payment or a disability-related payment will continue to receive Fuel Allowance through their Department of Social Protection payment.
- **Local Authority Rent/RAS:** The combination of income from CE and any Social Welfare payment will affect your Local Authority Rent and rent payable under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

New Participants on Community Employment

Since the 16th January 2012 new participants on Community Employment (CE) schemes **will not** be able to claim another Social Welfare payment at the same time as their participation on a Community Employment Scheme. This applies to all Social Welfare payments

- **Secondary Benefits:** You will retain an entitlement to the secondary benefits you were receiving immediately before going onto Community Employment provided you continue to satisfy the qualifying conditions .
- **Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement:** Your Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement will not be affected by the extra €20 training bonus paid as part of your CE payment.

Training on Community Employment

Each Community Employment project currently has a training and development budget for Community Employment participants. This budget will be used to pay for costs and expenses directly related to the participant's engagement on the Community Employment project in addition to their direct training and development. Expenditure on costs may vary from project to project, as such the amount available for direct training and development of CE participants may vary from scheme to scheme.

Please contact your CE scheme supervisor for more information on funding available for training.

Training is available to participants in four categories: Project-related training, Progression-related training, Core Skills training and Return to Education training (literacy and numeracy).

'Project related' training includes training and development of the participants skills to enable them to carry out their work on the CE scheme. 'Progression related' training provides for training which will enable participants to improve existing skills or learn additional skills necessary to progress into employment. 'Core Skills' training aims to provide additional personal and technical skills to help access employment. Return to Education training is offered to participants who feel they would benefit from such training.

The CE Individual Learner Plan (ILP) system is used to record each individual participant's training and work experience activities throughout their time on CE.

When you are undertaking training try to ensure that:

- The training is relevant and beneficial to your general skills and will prove useful in seeking employment after your scheme;
- The training and development modules you choose offer a recognised certificate or qualification;
- You obtain a relevant up-to-date reference from your CE supervisor outlining the training you received and the experience you have gained. A summary "Record of Achievement" document is now issued to each participant by the Supervisor recording successfully completed training as part of the CE Individual Learner Plan.

Additional Employment

You can take up additional employment outside of your CE scheme. Income from this work is subject to tax, PRSI and the Universal Social Charge in the normal way (see Chapter 5 ■ for information on tax and PRSI). Any additional income may affect your secondary benefits, in particular your Rent Supplement (see Chapter 2).

If you take up additional work outside of your CE scheme it may have an impact on your entitlement to qualify or re-qualify for a Disability related payment on completion of your CE scheme. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

What happens after I finish my CE options?

- Under the Part-Time Integration Option you may be eligible for another year on Community Employment. There is no automatic eligibility to an extension and only a maximum of 20% of the total number of CE places can be extended for a second year. You should talk to your CE supervisor if you feel that another year would increase your chances of getting a job later on. Your sponsor must request the extension from the Department of Social Protection at least 8 weeks before your finish date.
- You should speak with your DSP Employment Services Officer or LES office if there is one in your area, before you finish your scheme, to discuss your options for getting work.
- If you are unemployed after your CE scheme, you may qualify for either Jobseeker's Benefit or long-term Jobseeker's Allowance. You can choose the payment of most benefit to you.
- If you want to return to education after your scheme there are a number of programmes you may qualify for (see Chapter 6). If you are in receipt of an unemployment payment it is very important that you inform the local Department of Social Protection Office of any application you make to participate on any of these programmes.

If you are successful in securing a place on a programme you should inform the local Department of Social Protection Office and confirm arrangements to ensure your social welfare payment is continued.

CE Employment Rights

The INOU would support and promote the rights of CE participants to join a trade union in order to protect their employment rights.

Important Points

- If you are dismissed you have the right to receive a written notice outlining the reason for dismissal once you have completed a continuous year's service. If you feel you have been sacked unfairly, you can take a case to the Labour Relations Commission and make a complaint under the Unfair Dismissal Act. An employee generally requires one year's continuous service to claim under the Act.
- You are not required to work weekends or irregular hours unless this is a requirement of the job and was explained to you at your interview, and/or is specified in your job description.
- While the project sponsor decides sick leave policy, DSP reimburses the sponsor for a total of 7 full day's sick leave/14 half days sick leave if you supply a doctor's certificate. If you have the necessary PRSI contributions you can claim Illness Benefit, otherwise you will have to apply for Supplementary Welfare Allowance from your DSP Representative at your local Health Centre.

- All women are entitled to full statutory maternity leave on CE (26 weeks). If you do not qualify for Maternity Benefit i.e. if you don't have enough PRSI contributions, you should go to your local office of the Department of Social Protection and sign on. You can apply for the One-Parent Family Payment if you are a lone parent when your child is born. You may be entitled to claim Supplementary Welfare Allowance if you are waiting for either of these payments.

Holidays

- A participant engaged for the full duration of a CE scheme is entitled to 10.5 full days (81 hrs) holidays and pro-rata where a lesser period is worked.
- Holidays must be taken within the 52-week project period. Participants may qualify to receive payment in lieu of untaken annual leave only on cessation of their CE placement
- Arrangements for taking holidays are a matter of agreement between the sponsor and the participants.

 If you are on CE, the project sponsors (your employers) must follow the legislation relevant to part-time workers.

Complaints Procedures

If you have difficulties while on your scheme the Department of Social Protection (DSP) prescribes that each project should have procedures in place to deal with these difficulties. DSP is currently in the process of revising all their complaints procedures and when this is completed the results will be published on the DSP web site.

JOBBRIDGE

JobBridge is a National Internship Scheme that provides work experience placements for interns for a 6 or 9 month period.

The aim of the National Internship Scheme is to assist in breaking the cycle where jobseeker's are unable to get a job without experience, either as new entrants to the labour market after education or training or as unemployed workers wishing to learn new skills. The scheme will also give people a real opportunity to gain valuable experience to bridge the gap between study and the beginning of their working lives.

The scheme provides for up to 5,000 work experience placements in the private, public and voluntary sectors. Interns receive an additional allowance of €50 per week on top of their existing social welfare payment which is payable from the Department of Social Protection for the period of the internship.

Benefits of JobBridge

The benefits of participating in the JobBridge programme include:

- Gaining valuable work experience which you can add to your CV
- The opportunity to apply knowledge learned in training or education in a work environment
- The opportunity to enhance your skills and learn new ones through workplace learning
- The ability to explore a new career path
- The opportunity to enhance your career prospects
- To build your confidence through work experience.

Who is eligible?

In order to be eligible to participate in JobBridge – you must be:

- currently in receipt of a live claim (Jobseeker's Allowance/Jobseeker's Benefit/Signing for Credits) on the Live Register, and
- have been in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance or signing for Social Insurance Contribution Credits for a total of 3 months (78 days) or more in the last 6 months.
- **from the 28th May 2012**, you will qualify if you are in receipt of Disability Allowance or the One Parent Family payment

Periods spent on Back to Education Allowance, VTOS, FÁS/Fáilte Ireland Training courses, Youthreach, FIT, Community Employment Schemes, TUS, the Rural Social Scheme, Back to Work Scheme, Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, FÁS Job Initiative or Job Assist will count towards meeting the eligibility of JobBridge, provided:

- you have completed / are not currently participating on these programmes
- you have signed back on to the Live Register
- you are in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance or are signing for Jobseeker credits immediately before starting on JobBridge.

You must receive approval from the Department of Social Protection before starting on JobBridge.

Payment on JobBridge

You will receive an internship allowance that is equal to your current social welfare allowance payment (at time of commencement on the scheme) plus an additional €50 per week top-up which will be paid by the Department of Social Protection (DSP). If you are not in receipt of the full-rate of payment on your Jobseeker's Benefit / Jobseeker's Allowance payment you **will not** receive the full-rate of payment on the internship allowance. One Parent Families who complete a JobBridge Internship **will not** be treated as new applicants with regard to the age of their qualifying children.

The €50 top-up will be paid for the duration of the internship, but in arrears,

and it is expected that participants will receive this top-up allowance approximately 2 weeks after commencing on the programme.

All payments of the Internship Allowance will be made by the Department of Social Protection via Electronic Fund Transfer into the intern's bank account.

There is no employer top up contribution. However, there is nothing to prevent the company reimbursing you for approved vouched expenses incurred as part of the internship.

JobBridge – How to apply

Internships are advertised on www.jobbridge.ie, Jobs Ireland website and in local DSP offices.

If you are a jobseeker who is eligible for the scheme you can check the current internship opportunities on www.JobBridge.ie. When you have identified an internship, you apply to the host organisation as outlined in the advertisement. If the host organisation selects you it will give you an eligibility form to be stamped by your Social Welfare Local Office. Once your eligibility is confirmed, the Social Welfare office returns your completed form to JobBridge for processing.

JobBridge – Hours Worked

A standard Internship working week will range from 30-40 hours per week. You will be required to participate on the scheme for a minimum of 30 hours and a maximum of 40 hours per week. Failure to do so may result in a reduction of the internship allowance.

JobBridge – Annual Leave

Interns are entitled to 1.75 annual leave days per month of internship and all Public holidays.

JobBridge – Time Off

Although you are not an employee of the company you should still be given adequate time off for attending job interviews during the placement to visit your local SW office and Employment Services office in order to facilitate your job seeking activities. If any issues arise in relation to seeking time off to do this please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

JobBridge – References

When you are finished the internship the employer must supply you with a reference that will detail the professional development/learning outcomes and experience you have acquired over the course of the placement.

JobBridge – Issues or Problems

Workplace issues should be resolved with the host organisation. If the internship is not working out as expected you should discuss this with the person that is supervising/mentoring your internship. If this does not resolve the issue you can contact JobBridge by sending an email to jobbridge@fas.ie providing the following: Your name, contact details, the host organisation name, internship title and brief outline of the issue.

You may avail of a maximum of 2 JobBridge internships over a two year period for a total of 9 months (39 weeks). So if you left one internship position you may be able to secure another position, within the 2 year period, for the remainder of the 9 month period.

JobBridge – Finishing before completion

An internship can finish early with one week's notice on either side. So, for example, if you secure employment you will only need to give one week's notice.

If your removal from the internship scheme is because of disciplinary reasons or for reasons of gross misconduct this may affect your entitlement to a Jobseeker's Payment.

If you leave the internship scheme voluntarily and seek to reclaim your Jobseeker's payment your application may be reviewed. If the Department of Social Protection form the opinion that you have left the internship scheme without just cause or good reason your eligibility / entitlement to a Jobseeker's payment may be affected. Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

JobBridge – Secondary Benefits

You will keep any secondary benefits you had before you took up the JobBridge internship scheme.

- Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement: Will not be affected by the extra €50 per week top-up.
- Medical Card: Will not be affected by the extra €50 per week top-up.
- Fuel Allowance: Will not be affected by the extra €50 per week top-up.
- Local Authority Rent/RAS: The combination of income from the internship allowance and the €50 per week top-up may affect your Local Authority Rent and rent payable under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).

JobBridge – Employment Incentives to Recruit Unemployed People

An employer who recruits a person who has been on the JobBridge National Internship Scheme for 6 months or more may be eligible for the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme.

WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAMME (WPP)

This programme has been introduced to bring employers and the unemployed together for a nine month work experience placement. It allows you to apply your skills and gain valuable experience in a workplace setting, enhancing your prospects of getting a job in the future. If you are unemployed and have not secured paid work, the programme allows you to apply your existing skills and gain new competencies and valuable experience in a workplace setting.

To apply to join this programme you must be registered with FÁS, and record an 'expression of interest' in joining the programme. You can do this at any local FÁS Employment Office, or Local Employment Service (LES) Office.

If you are already registered with FÁS you can record your 'expression of interest' over the phone by calling Freephone 1800 611 116 or direct call 046 9738000.

WPP – Who is Eligible?

The Work Placement Programme (WPP) is open to both Graduates and Non Graduates. Anyone who is unemployed is eligible to apply for the Work Placement Programme. There are 2 streams in the Work Placement Programme.

Stream 1

In Stream 1 there are 1,000 places for graduates. To be eligible for Stream 1 of the Work Placement Programme you must:

- Have been awarded a qualification at level 7 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications, in 2009 or earlier.
- Be unemployed. You do not have to be getting a social welfare payment.

Stream 2

In Stream 2 there are 1,000 places for unemployed people, with 250 of these places reserved for those aged under 34. To be eligible for Stream 2 of the Work Placement Programme you must be unemployed. You do not have to be getting a social welfare payment.

- You do not have to be a graduate, but graduates can apply.

If you are an unemployed graduate with a level 7 qualification you can apply for both the graduate placement (WPP1) and the non-graduate placements (WPP2). Otherwise, you can apply for all non-graduate placements (WPP2).

WPP – Do I get paid?

No. The placement is unpaid and voluntary. However, if you are already in receipt of certain social welfare payments, you may be allowed to retain your payment while on a placement.

- People who are not getting a social welfare payment, or who are on a payment for less than 3 months, are eligible to take part, but will not be paid while on the programme.

WPP – Keeping your social welfare payment

If you are already getting a social welfare payment, you must notify the Department of Social Protection that you are starting a placement, as this changes your status. If you are getting a qualifying social welfare payment for at least 3 months, you may be able to keep your payment while on the Work Placement Programme.

You must first receive the approval of the Department of Social Protection. Arrangements have been made to allow participants on the Work Placement Programme to sign on by post if they are claiming Jobseeker's payments.

The qualifying payments are:

- Jobseeker’s Allowance
- Disability Allowance
- Invalidity Pension
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Jobseeker’s Benefit
- Blind Pension
- Illness Benefit

If you are getting Disability Allowance, Blind Pension, Invalidity Pension or Illness Benefit you will need written approval from the Department of Social Protection to do rehabilitative work before you can apply for the Work Placement Programme.

If you are on Illness Benefit you must be getting a social welfare payment for six months before you can apply for the programme.

WPP – No Social Welfare Payment

You can participate in the Work Placement Programme, even if you are not in receipt of a Social Welfare payment. However, you will not receive any payment while you participate in the Work Placement Programme.

WPP – Secondary Benefits

You will keep any secondary benefits you had before you took up the Work Placement Programme.

WPP – Employment Incentives to Recruit Unemployed People

An employer who recruits a person who has been on the Work Placement Programme for 6 months or more may be eligible for the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme.

WPP – How many places are available

The Work Placement Programme was expanded to provide an additional 5,000 places in the public service and a further 500 placements for graduates in the private sector. The total number of places available on the Work Placement Programme is

Sector	WPP Stream	No of places
Private Sector	WPP 1 (Graduate)	1,500
Private Sector	WPP 2 (Non-Graduate)	1,000
Public Sector	WPP 1 & WPP 2 (Graduate and Non-Graduate)	5,000
	TOTAL	7,500

For further information on the Work Placement Programme (WPP) and to view placements visit the FÁS website www.fas.ie or drop into your local FÁS Employment Services Office.

WPP – How to apply

If you are interested in participating in the Work Placement Programme you can view the available placements using the FÁS Job Search facility on www.fas.ie. You can then apply to your local FÁS office. If you are already registered with FÁS or you can record an 'expression of interest' on Freephone 1800 611 116 or (046) 973 8000.

FÁS will refer you to an employer who is registered as a provider with the Work Placement Programme. The employer may interview you as a potential participant.

TÚS – COMMUNITY WORK PLACEMENT INITIATIVE

Tús is a community work placement scheme providing short-term working opportunities for people who are long-term unemployed. The work opportunities are to benefit the community and are provided by the not for profit community and voluntary organisations in both urban and rural areas. The Tús is managed by Local Development Companies and Údarás na Gaeltachta in the gaeltacht areas for the Department of Social Protection, which has overall responsibility for the scheme.

Tús – Selection process

There is no application process for Tús. Participants will be randomly selected from the Live Register and contacted by their local social welfare office and offered the opportunity to participate in the scheme.

If they agree to participate on Tús scheme they will be referred to their local development company or Údarás na Gaeltachta where they will be recruited for a suitable placement when it becomes available. You can read more about the selection process on the Department of Social Protection website at www.welfare.ie.

If a Jobseeker who is selected to participate on Tús fails to co-operate or fails to take up the offer, they will be referred for further action and investigation. As there are only limited places available on the scheme, not all those eligible will be contacted.

Tús – Working hours

Participants will work for 19½ hours a week and the placement lasts 12 months. When the placement finishes, they should sign on again with their local social welfare office. They cannot participate in the Tús scheme again for 3 years

To be eligible to participate on Tús you must:

- Have been continuously unemployed for at least 12 months and 'signing on' on a full-time basis; and
- Have been receiving a jobseeker's payment (Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance) from the Department of Social Protection for at least 12 months; and
- Be currently receiving Jobseeker's Allowance.

Unlike other schemes where people have to apply for a place, the DSP will identify potential participants who will be contacted by their social welfare local office and offered a placement on the Tús scheme. They will be referred to their local development company or Udaras na Gaeltachta and will be recruited when a suitable place becomes available.

Tús - Payment while participating

Participants on Tús will receive the maximum rate of Jobseeker's Allowance plus €20 a week. Participants aged under 25 will also be paid the maximum rate of Jobseeker's Allowance plus €20.

Payments on Tús:

Personal rate	€208.00	Qualified Adult rate	€124.80
Qualified Child: full-rate	€29.80	Qualified Child: half-rate	€14.90

All Tús payments will be made by Electronic Fund Transfer into your bank account.

Tús – Secondary Benefits

You may keep any secondary benefits you had before you took up the Tús placement scheme, subject to income levels.

- **Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement:** your income from Tús may affect the rate of your Rent/Mortgage Interest Supplement. You should inform the DSP representative (formerly known as the Community Welfare Officer) of any change in your circumstances.
- **Medical Card:** Applicants in receipt of jobseeker's Allowance for a period of 12 months or more are entitled to retain their Medical Card for three years on taking up employment from the date on which the employment commenced.
- **Fuel Allowance:** Will not be affected by the extra €20 per week payment.
- **Local Authority Rent/RAS:** The combination of income from Tús and the €20 per week top-up may affect your Local Authority Rent and rent payable under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).

Tús – Refusal of work placement

Under the National Employment Action Plan any person in receipt of a Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) payment is required to take up work opportunities such as the offer of a Tús placement. If you refuse a work opportunity without just cause or good reason, you may have your social welfare payment reduced or terminated. If, following a refusal of a placement, your payment is reduced or terminated you may appeal this decision to the Social Welfare Appeals office within 21 days.

Tús – Other work

Participants on Tús can take up other employment provided it does not interfere with the work and times of the Tús work placement. If participants

are offered alternative work/training they can continue to do this alongside their Tús placement. If this is not possible, they may be granted special leave but will resume Tús on its completion.

- The Tús payment is taxable but the amount payable depends on individual circumstances. Class A PRSI contributions will be paid for all participants.
- Participants on Tús are exempt from the Universal Social Charge.

Tús - Family Income Supplement (FIS)

Participants on the Tús Programme do not qualify for Family Income Supplement (FIS). However, Tús Supervisors may qualify for the Family Income Supplement subject to the normal FIS qualification conditions. Tús Supervisors may qualify for the Revenue Job Assist subject to the normal qualifying conditions.

Tús - Annual Leave / Public Holidays

Tús participants are entitled to annual leave totalling 8% of their total hours worked over a 12 month period. Pro-rata annual leave entitlements apply to periods worked of less than 12 months duration within the leave year.

Participants who are due to work on a Public Holiday are entitled to a paid day off on that day. Participants who are not due to work on a Public Holiday are entitled to be paid time-in-lieu at one-fifth of their weekly hours.

Tús - Issues or Problems

Workplace issues should be resolved with the organisation managing Tús. If the position is not working out as expected you should discuss this with your supervisor. If this does not resolve the issue contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for information and assistance.

Tús - Finishing before completion

If your removal from Tús is because of disciplinary reasons or for reasons of gross misconduct this may affect your entitlement to a Jobseeker's Payment.

If you leave Tús voluntarily and seek to reclaim your Jobseeker's payment, your eligibility for a Jobseeker's payment may be reviewed. If the Department of Social Protection form the opinion that you have left the internship scheme without just cause or good reason, your eligibility / entitlement to a Jobseeker's payment may be affected. Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMME (CSP)

The Community Services Programme aims to support local community activity to address disadvantage and provide local employment opportunities for certain groups of people who have been previously unemployed. It provides funding to community services and community businesses including community services for older people and those with disabilities, rural transport initiatives and environmental projects. It is managed for the Department of Social Protection by Pobal, a not-for-profit company.

The Programme focuses on communities where public and private sector

services are lacking, either through geographical or social isolation or because demand levels are not sufficient. The Programme also enables the benefit of other public investment to be realised (as in the case of investment in community centres and resources).

CSP – Types of projects

In general, applicants must be not-for-profit companies with sufficient capacity to undertake service delivery and the management of staff. They must also have sufficient financial resources and opportunity to generate revenue to maintain the proposed service, and where necessary, prepare a business plan acceptable to the Programme.

The following types of project that can apply for funding include:

- Community services for older people (excluding healthcare provision)
- Community services which support or employ people with disabilities (excluding healthcare provision)
- Projects, which support and employ stabilised and recovering drug misusers (excluding healthcare provision)
- Community services or community enterprises for island communities
- Community radio
- Community enterprises which support or employ Travellers (excluding healthcare provision)
- Supervising community halls and facilities with a priority focus on disadvantaged areas

Following assessment, contracts of up to 3 years' duration are typically issued to successful community companies and co-operatives that meet the criteria for the Programme.

CSP – Funded organisations are required to:

- Operate on a not for profit basis
- Prioritise the unemployed in their recruitment processes. As a general principle, 70% of people recruited by the project must be from specific catchment groups (as identified below)

CSP – Who is eligible?

Individuals recruited to CSP supported worker posts should be from the following categories:

- Unemployed and in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance or One Parent Family Payment
- In receipt of Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension or Blind Persons Pension
- Members of the Travelling community in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance or One Parent Family Payment
- Ex-prisoners
- Stabilised drug-misusers

- People employed from Community Employment (CE) and Job Initiative (JI) schemes

CSP – Secondary Benefits

You will keep any secondary benefits you had before you took up a placement on the Community Service Programme (CSP), subject to income levels.

- **Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement:** Participants will be subject to the standard Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement regulations – see chapter 2.
- **Medical Card:** Participants may retain their Medical Card where determined by the HSE
- **Local Authority Rent/RAS:** Any additional income above the standard Social Welfare payment for your circumstances may affect your Local Authority Rent and rent payable under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS). Persons participating on the Community Services Programme may qualify for consideration for accommodation on the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) if not already on it
- **Family Income Supplement:** Qualifying grant-aided employees may be eligible to apply for Family Income Supplement (FIS).

CSP – How to apply

If you are interested in participating in a position on the Community Services Programme you must apply directly to the Community Service Programme in question.

JOB INITIATIVE (JI)

This programme is closed and is no longer recruiting participants.

There is a prior commitment from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation that there will be no compulsory lay-offs on JI. Those participants who remain on JI may have their contracts renewed until they reach 66 years of age, when FÁS would cease funding them. Community Employment (CE) participants may replace people who leave JI voluntarily, depending on circumstances.

EMPLOYMENT AND SELF EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

A number of schemes exist to support long-term unemployed people and those in receipt of other payments to return to work.

- Revenue Job Assist
- Part-time Job Incentive Scheme
- Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA)
- Short-Term Enterprise Allowance
- Back to Work Allowance – closed to new applicants

REVENUE JOB ASSIST

The Revenue Job Assist scheme provides additional tax allowances for people who receive qualifying Social Welfare payments and are returning to employment. Under this scheme the employee receives an additional tax allowance and the employer will also receive additional tax relief.

- Revenue Job Assist only applies if you are taking up a job. It does not apply if you are becoming self-employed.
- If you change jobs once during the 3 years you can still keep the allowance. If however, you move on to a third job you will lose the allowance.
- You can only claim this relief for one 3 year period. If you claim the relief, become unemployed and then return to work again in the same 3 year period, you can continue to claim. If you claim the relief, become unemployed and return to work after the three year period, you cannot claim the relief.

Extra Tax Allowances

Under this scheme the additional tax relief is available for a three-year period on a tapered basis as follows:

	Extra Personal Tax Allowance	Extra Tax Allowance for each qualifying child
Year 1	€3,810	€1, 270
Year 2	€2, 540	€850
Year 3	€1, 270	€425

The additional tax allowances are an extra personal tax allowance and a child tax allowance for each qualifying child. These allowances are marginally rated which means they are allowed at the individual's highest rate of tax and appear as an increase to your tax credits and Standard Rate Cut Off Point on the Tax Credit Certificate.

The Revenue Job Assist is added to your other tax credits and Standard Rate Cut Off Point and can be claimed for three years. Also, this tax allowance can be claimed irrespective of your marital status. To work out how much income tax you will pay see Chapter 5.

Employer's tax deduction

Employers who employ people who qualify for Revenue Job Assist can make a double deduction of the employee's wages from their company's taxable income for up to 3 years provided that the employee remains with them. This means that double the amount of the wages of a qualifying employee and double the amount of the employer's PRSI contribution for that employee can be deducted by the employer from the company's taxable income. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

Qualifying for Revenue Job Assist

Different qualification requirements apply to different Social Welfare payments – but under this scheme you must be employed for a minimum of

30 hours a week and the job must be capable of lasting at least 12 months.

- **Jobseeker's:** Jobseeker's will qualify for this scheme after 12 months on either Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit.
- **Other Social Welfare Payments:** In receipt of one of the following payments for 12 months or more, One Parent Family Payment, Disability Allowance or Blind Person's Pension. In receipt of Invalidity Pension for 12 months or Illness Benefit for 3 years or more.
- **Ex-prisoners:** Ex-prisoners will qualify after 12 months or more (once an underlying entitlement to JA is established before starting employment).
- **PRSI Credits:** Signing for PRSI credits only:

A person may not get Invalidity Pension and participate in the Revenue Job Assist Scheme. If you are on Invalidity Pension and wish to take up the Revenue Job Assist Scheme you are obliged to give up your Invalidity Pension.

Other Qualification Conditions

- You will not qualify for Revenue Job Assist if you have even had one day's employment in the past year. However, up to 15 days of incidental employment, which has been taken into account in calculating Social Welfare benefits will not be counted (i.e you must have been in receipt of Social Welfare payments for 12 months plus up to 15 days to include incidental employment days).
- You will not qualify for Revenue Job Assist if you have been made redundant in the last 6 months
- Time spent on Job Initiative, Community Employment, certain FÁS training courses and the Back to Education Scheme can also make up part of the 12-month period, and do not count as employment when assessing eligibility.

Secondary Benefits

- Participants on Revenue Job Assist who have a Rent Supplement will be assessed in accordance with the standard Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement regulations– See Chapter 2.
- Those remaining on Rent Supplement may qualify for consideration for accommodation on the Rental Accommodation Scheme.
- You will retain your Medical Card for three years.
- You may be eligible for FIS (see FIS section in this Chapter).

How to apply

Further information on Revenue Job Assist can be obtained from your local tax office or www.revenue.ie. You could also check with your local FÁS Placement Office for any jobs notified by employers under Revenue Job Assist. [Contact the INOU on \(01\) 856 0088](tel:018560088) for more information

PART-TIME JOB INCENTIVE SCHEME (PTJI)

The Part-Time Job Incentive Scheme is to help a person get back into the workplace in the short-term by doing part-time work under 24 hours a week.

If you have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for 15 months or more you may be able to claim the Part-time Job Incentive for one year, instead of Jobseeker's Allowance. It may be possible to extend the scheme for a further period – contact the Department of Social Protection for more information on their Lo-Call information line 1890 66 22 44.

PTJI - Who is eligible?

- You are eligible to participate on the Part-Time Job Incentive Scheme if you:
- Are in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) for 15 months or more **and** are receiving a higher Jobseeker's payment than the appropriate part-time Job Incentive supplement payable for your circumstances.
- Have found a job with less than 24 hours employment a week, lasting for at least two months.

PTJI – Spousal Swap

There is no spousal swap facility on the Part-Time Job Incentive scheme. This means that in the family unit, only the person in receipt of the Jobseeker's Allowance payment for 15 months is eligible to participate on the scheme not the qualified adult.

PTJI – Duration of the Scheme

You can stay on the scheme for one year. This can be extended for a further period. Contact the Department of Social Protection for more information on their Lo-Call information line 1890 66 22 44.

PTJI – Payment

You will receive a Part-time Job Allowance instead of your Jobseeker's Allowance payment. The rate of payment is:

- €119.00 per week (single person)*
- €193.90 per week (with an adult dependant)*.

**There is no payment for any qualified children on this payment. You will continue to receive your monthly Child Benefit (Children's Allowance) payment.*

Payment is made each week at your local post office. You will be required to attend your local Social Welfare Office each week to give a signed declaration of the hours you have worked.

PTJI - Income from employment

Your income from employment will not affect your payment on the Part-Time Job Incentive Scheme. However, your combined income from employment and the Part-Time Job Incentive scheme may affect your secondary benefits.

PTJI - Tax and PRSI

You must pay PRSI contribution at class A or J on your earnings from employment. If you are in insurable employment and your earnings are €38 or more per week you will pay a PRSI contribution at Class A. If your earnings are under €38 then you will pay a Class J contribution.

Your wages will be subject to Tax at the appropriate rate.

PTJI - Secondary Benefits

You may keep any secondary benefits you had before you took up employment on the Part-Time Job Incentive Scheme

- **Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement:** You will be subject to the standard Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement regulations – see chapter 2.
- **Medical Card:** You can retain your Medical Card on the scheme. Income from employment will not affect your entitlement to the Medical Card.
- **Local Authority Rent/RAS:** Any additional income above the standard Social Welfare payment for your circumstances may affect your Local Authority Rent and rent payable under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).
- **Family Income Supplement:** If you are working at least 19 hours per week (or 38 hours per fortnight) and you have at least one qualified child under the age of 22, you may be entitled to Family Income Supplement. Hours worked by your spouse or partner may be combined. The Family Income Supplement is a weekly supplement paid if your family income is below a certain limit for your family size. Income from the Part-Time Job Incentive scheme and your earnings from employment will be added together when working out your entitlement.

PTJI – Genuinely Seeking Work

If you are participating on the Part-Time Job Incentive Scheme you are **still required** to look for full-time employment under the ‘Genuinely Seeking Work’ conditions associated with Jobseeker’s Payments. Please see Chapter 1 for more information on your obligations under the Genuinely Seeking Work conditions associated with this payment.

PTJI – Finishing or leaving the PTJI

Finishing: If you finish the Part-Time Job Incentive (PTJI) scheme after one year, or any extended period, or the job ceases through no fault of your own you may re-qualify for long-term Jobseeker’s Allowance as long as there is no change in your circumstances (other than finishing the part-time job). You may qualify for Jobseeker’s Benefit instead of Jobseeker’s Allowance if you have enough PRSI contributions.

Leaving: If you leave the PTJI voluntarily, before the end of the scheme, and seek to reclaim your Jobseeker’s payment, your application may be reviewed based on Genuinely Seeking Work grounds – see Chapter 1 for information on Genuinely Seeking Work conditions. If the Department of Social Protection

form the opinion that you have left the PTJI without just cause or good reason your eligibility / entitlement to a Jobseeker's payment may be affected.

If you are removed from the PTJI because of disciplinary reasons or for reasons of gross misconduct this may affect your entitlement to a Jobseeker's Payment.

Please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information

PTJI - How to Apply

You should apply for the PTJI scheme once you have secured a part-time job. However, if you have started employment before receiving approval you should apply for the PTJI as soon as possible through your local Social Welfare Office. You will be asked to complete the application form **PTA1** giving details of your part-time employment.

You will also be given a form to be completed by your employer at the end of each four week period. This is necessary to confirm that you worked for less than 24 hours each week and that you are insurable employed.

Contact the Department of Social Protection for more information on their Lo-Call information line 1890 66 22 44 or the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

BACK TO WORK ENTERPRISE ALLOWANCE (BTWEA)

- The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance encourages unemployed people and those receiving other Social Welfare payments to take up self employment opportunities by allowing them to retain a proportion of their social welfare payment, plus secondary benefits.

BTWEA – Who is eligible?

You will qualify for the BTWEA if you:

- Are setting up a self-employment business that has been approved in advance in writing by a Facilitator or Integrated Development (Partnership) Company

And

- Are 12 months getting Jobseeker's Benefit or Allowance. If you are on Jobseeker's Benefit you must have an underlying entitlement to Jobseeker's Allowance. If there is no Jobseeker's Allowance entitlement, the qualifying period for Jobseeker's Benefit is two years.

Or

- Getting One Parent Family Payment, Disability Allowance, Blind Pension, Farm Assist, Incapacity Supplement, Pre-Retirement Allowance, Invalidity Pension, Carer's Allowance, Widow's/Widower's (Non-Contributory) Pension, Deserted Wife's Benefit/Allowance, or Prisoner's Wife Allowance for at least 12 months

Or

- Getting Illness Benefit for 3 or more years

- Getting Farm Assist, providing that the self-employment is now in relation to the holding and not the continuation of an existing operation
- A person released from prison who satisfies the eligibility criteria for the scheme

BTWEA - Helping you Qualify for BTWEA

- Periods spent on FÁS or Fáilte Ireland training courses, Community Employment, Community Services Programme, Rural Social Scheme, FIT, FÁS Jobs Initiative and VTOS, count towards the qualifying period – **only if you received a qualifying Social Welfare payment before participating in any of these.**
- Periods spent in receipt of Supplementary Welfare Allowance and Direct Provision count towards the qualifying period - **only if you are receiving a qualifying Social Welfare payment after these periods.**
- Periods spent on Live Registers in the E.U. can be accepted as periods of unemployment provided you have signed the Live Register here for at least 13 weeks.
- Time spent on other Social Welfare payments can be combined to make up the qualifying period and other additional qualification exceptions may apply, subject to your circumstances. Please check with the INOU for more details.

Not Qualified

- Periods on the Revenue Job Assist or FÁS 'Job Start' are not considered as periods of unemployment and do not qualify persons for the BTWEA.

BTWEA - Duration and Payment

The amount of time you can participate on the BTWEA is 2 years. You will receive:

- 100% of your Social Welfare payment in the first year, and
- 75% of your Social Welfare payment in the second year

Your payment on the BTWEA will be based on the rate of payment in force at the time of your application for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance. If qualifying Social Welfare payment is not being paid at the full rate you will only receive 100% and 75% of this reduced rate during the period of the BTWEA.

You should ensure that you are in receipt of the maximum rate of payment applicable to your circumstance before taking up the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance.

The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance is paid directly into your current, deposit or saving account in your bank or building society account each week. The allowance cannot be paid into a mortgage account.

BTWEA – Additional supports available

- Technical Assistance grants, of up to €1,000, are available to assist you in

preparing a business plan, doing market research or product development.

- Training grants are available to give you the skills necessary to run your business e.g., computer skills, management skills etc.
- County/City Enterprise Boards develop enterprise in their area and are responsible for grant aiding and supporting new businesses with less than 5 employees (see Chapter 7).

BTWEA – Income from employment

Your income from self-employment will not affect your payment on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance. However, your combined income from employment and the BTWEA may affect your secondary benefits.

BTWEA – Tax and PRSI

While participating on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance you will pay a Class S PRSI contribution on your earnings from self-employment. Class S PRSI does not enable you to avail of the full range of Social Welfare benefits available to an employee, for example you would not be entitled to claim either Jobseeker's Benefit or Illness Benefit.

You will not accrue any entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit while self-employed. Self-employed persons cannot make Class A PRSI contributions. You will not receive any paid or credited class A PRSI contributions while on the BTWEA. Your income from self-employment will be subject to Tax at the appropriate rate. For more information on PRSI and Tax please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

BTWEA – Qualified Adults – Spousal Swap

The Qualified Adult of a person who is eligible for the BTWEA may be able to do a 'spousal swap' to allow the Qualified Adult to take up self employment under the BTWEA. This involves the main claimant and the Qualified Adult exchanging places on the welfare payment.

If the original claimant is entitled to sign on for 'credits', he or she can continue to claim those PRSI 'credits' – see Chapter 2 for information on PRSI credits. The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) cannot be paid at the same time as another social welfare payment, so if the original claimant (who is now a qualified adult because of the spousal swap) decides to claim another payment in their own right the person in receipt of the BTWEA must stop claiming Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA). For more information, contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088

It is important to ensure that a spousal swap is done properly, bearing in mind all the relevant factors and implications, please check with the INOU on (01) 856 0088 or your local Department of Social Protection Office.

Note: Once entitlement to BTWEA is established, a qualified adult is free to take up employment without affecting the BTWEA.

BTWEA – Secondary Benefits

You can keep your secondary benefits (apart from Rent or Mortgage Interest Supplement) for as long as you are getting the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance provided you satisfy a means test

Household income includes your spouse's, civil partner's or cohabitant's income, but allows for PRSI and reasonable travel expenses. Income from the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance is not taken into account for the purpose of the €317.43 weekly income limit but income from work is taken into account.

- **Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement:** You will retain your Rent / Mortgage Supplement if your total gross household income (not including the BTWEA) is less than €317.43 per week. See chapter 2 for more information on Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement.
- **Medical Card:** You can retain your Medical Card on the scheme. Your income from employment will not affect your entitlement to the Medical Card.
- **Local Authority Rent/RAS:** Any additional income above the standard Social Welfare payment for your circumstances may affect your Local Authority Rent and rent payable under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).
- **Family Income Supplement:** You will not qualify for the Family Income Supplement while participating on the BTWEA. FIS is only payable to 'employees', persons paying a class A PRSI contribution. Participants on the BTWEA pay class S PRSI and cannot make PRSI contributions at class A.

BTWEA – Finishing or Leaving the BTWEA

If you finish the BTWEA, or leave within the 2 year life of the scheme, and are not fully self-employed by the business you may be able to claim Jobseeker's Allowance or in certain circumstances Jobseeker's Benefit.

You do not need to de-register as self-employed, close your business premises or sell your equipment/materials or tools in order to qualify for a Jobseeker's Allowance payment. Self-employed people can continue to work in their business and get a Jobseeker's Allowance payment if their income from their business is below a certain level. For more information on seeking a review contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

Your application for Jobseeker's Allowance will be means tested (see chapter 1 for more information on the means test) and will take into consideration income from your self-employment. You will need to supply the Department of Social Protection completed accounts for the last 12 months trading. Your application will also be reviewed based on Genuinely Seeking Work grounds – see chapter 1 for information on Genuinely Seeking Work conditions.

BTWEA - Re-qualifying for the BTWEA

If you have previously participated in the BTWEA Scheme and exhausted your entitlement, you can participate a second time after a period of at least 5 years has elapsed.

BTWEA – Short-term Enterprise Allowance

If you have previously participated in the BTWEA Scheme and have exhausted

your entitlement to the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) scheme, you may be able to participate on the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance.

In order to do so you would need to be in receipt of a Jobseeker's Benefit payment at the time of your application. You would be entitled to engage in self-employment for the remaining duration of your Jobseeker's Benefit claim at that time.

If you are in receipt of a Jobseeker's Benefit payment there is no restriction in taking up the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance after any previous participation on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance. Contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 for more information.

BTWEA – How to Apply

To apply for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, you will need to complete application form **BTW 2** which is available from your local Social Welfare Office, and return it to the Facilitator in your Social Welfare Local Office.

If you live in an area covered by a local Partnership Company or Integrated Local Development Company (ILDC), you should return form BTW 2 to the Enterprise Officer in your local Partnership or ILDC.

The Enterprise Officer or Facilitator will look at your business proposal and may discuss certain aspects of it with you. You **must not** take up self-employment until you have received written approval from the Partnership/ILDC or Department of Social Protection.

If you are accepted on to the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, you must register as self-employed.

For more information on the BTWEA contact your local Social Welfare office or LoCall: 1890 92 79 99 or visit www.welfare.ie

BTWEA – Refusal of BTWEA

The BTWEA is an administrative scheme. This means that you cannot appeal a refusal to engage in the scheme to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. However you can ask the Department of Social Protection to review your application if you feel that you have been wrongly refused the allowance. [For more information on seeking a review contact the INOU on \(01\) 856 0088.](#)

SHORT-TERM ENTERPRISE ALLOWANCE (STEA)

The Short-Term Enterprise Allowance encourages persons in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit to take up self employment opportunities by allowing them to retain a payment equivalent to the Jobseeker's Benefit, plus secondary benefits.

This scheme is particularly useful for people who have recently lost their jobs or been made redundant, but who have a business idea they wish to pursue immediately

STEAs – Who is eligible?

You will qualify for the STEA if you:

- Have an entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit and have 104 contributions paid, and are in receipt of a Jobseeker's Benefit payment, **and**
- Are setting up a self-employment business that has been approved in advance in writing by a Facilitator or Integrated Development (Partnership) Company

STEAs – Duration and Payment

The Short-Term Enterprise Allowance replaces your Jobseeker's Benefit. It will be paid at the same rate as your Jobseeker's Benefit, including any increases for adult and child dependants.

The amount of time you can participate on the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance is directly related to the amount of time left on your Jobseeker's Benefit payment. It can only be paid for a maximum of 1 year and it ends when your entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit ends.

The Short-Term Enterprise Allowance is paid directly into your current, deposit or saving account in your bank or building society account each week. The allowance cannot be paid into a mortgage account.

STEAs – Income from employment

Your income from self-employment will not affect your payment on the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance. However, your combined income from employment and the STEA may affect your secondary benefits.

STEAs – Tax and PRSI

While participating on the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance you will pay a Class S PRSI contribution on your earnings from self-employment. Class S PRSI does not enable you to avail of the full range of Social Welfare benefits available to an employee, for example you would not be entitled to claim either Jobseeker's Benefit or Illness Benefit.

You will not accrue any entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit while self-employed. Self-employed persons cannot make Class A PRSI contributions. You will not receive any paid or credited class A PRSI contributions while on the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance. Your income from self-employment will be subject to Tax at the appropriate rate. For more information on PRSI and Tax please contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

STEAs – Qualified Adults – Spousal Swap

There is no spousal swap facility on the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance. This means that in the family unit, only the person in receipt of the Jobseeker's Benefit payment is eligible to participate on the scheme not the qualified adult.

STEAs – Secondary Benefits

You may be able to retain your secondary benefits for as long as you are getting the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance, subject to the qualifying conditions for receipt of the secondary benefit.

Household income includes your Short-Term Enterprise Allowance payment, income from self-employment, your spouse's, civil partner's or cohabitant's income, but allows for PRSI and reasonable travel expenses.

- **Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement:** You will be subject to the standard Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement regulations – see chapter 2.
- **Medical Card:** You may retain your Medical Card on the scheme. Your income from employment may affect your entitlement to the Medical Card.
- **Local Authority Rent/RAS:** Any additional income above the standard Social Welfare payment for your circumstances may affect your Local Authority Rent and rent payable under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).
- **Family Income Supplement:** You will not qualify for the Family Income Supplement while participating on the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance. FIS is only payable to 'employees', persons paying a class A PRSI contribution. Participants on the BTWEA pay class S PRSI and cannot make PRSI contributions at class A.

STEAs – Leaving the STEA

If you leave the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance before your entitlement to the scheme expires, and are not fully self-employed by the business, you may be able to seek to re-claim Jobseeker's Benefit for the remaining period left on your original Jobseeker's Benefit claim.

If you leave the scheme, and seek to reclaim Jobseeker's Benefit, you do not need to de-register as self-employed, close your business premises or sell your equipment/materials or tools in order to qualify for a Jobseeker's Benefit payment. Self-employed people can continue to work in their business and get a Jobseeker's Benefit payment. For more information on seeking a review contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

STEAs – When the STEA ends

When your entitlement to the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance ends, and if you are not fully self-employed by the business, you may be able to apply for a Jobseeker's Allowance payment.

You can continue to engage in self-employment while in receipt of a Jobseeker's Allowance payment if you meet the means test and provided you can show that you are also available for and 'Genuinely Seeking' full-time employment – see Genuinely Seeking work in Chapter 1.

Dependent on the nature, type and extent of your business you can, technically, be engaged in self-employment every day and still qualify for a Jobseeker's Allowance payment – provided your overall income stays below a certain amount.

In such instances, the number of days you are engaged in self-employment is not relevant. You could qualify for Jobseeker's Allowance even if you are engaged in self-employment every day.

You should not seek to claim a Jobseeker's Allowance payment while engaged in self-employment without fully informing, and discussing the matter with, the Department of Social Protection. Failure to do so may result in loss of payment, loss of secondary benefits and result in an assessment of overpayment being made against you.

Your application for Jobseeker's Allowance will be means tested (see chapter 1 for more information on the means test) and will take into consideration income from your self-employment. You will need to supply the Department of Social Protection completed accounts for the last 12 months trading.

STEa – Back to Work Enterprise Allowance

Under normal circumstances, a person in receipt of either a Jobseeker's Allowance payment or a Jobseeker's Benefit payment (where you have an underlying entitlement to Jobseeker's Allowance) can apply to participate on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance after 12 months on the payment. This **does not** apply to persons who have exhausted their entitlement to the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance.

If you have previously participated in the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance (STEa) and exhausted your entitlement, you can only seek to participate on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) after a period of at least 5 years has elapsed between completion of the STEa and your application for the BTWEA.

STEa – How to Apply

To apply for the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance, you will need to complete application form **STEa 1** which is available from your local Social Welfare Office, and return it to the Facilitator in your Social Welfare Local Office.

If you live in an area covered by a local Partnership Company or Integrated Local Development Company (ILDC), you should return form **STEa 1** to the Enterprise Officer in your local Partnership or ILDC.

The Enterprise Officer or Facilitator will look at your business proposal and may discuss certain aspects of it with you. You **must not** take up self-employment until you have received written approval from the Partnership / ILDC or Department of Social Protection.

If you are accepted on to the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance, you must register as self-employed.

For more information on the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance contact your local Social Welfare office or LoCall: 1890 92 79 99 or visit www.welfare.ie

STEa – Refusal of STEa

The Short-Term Enterprise Allowance is non-statutory scheme. This means that you cannot appeal a refusal to engage in the scheme to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. However you can ask the Department of Social Protection to review your application if you feel that you have been wrongly refused the allowance. For more information contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

BACK TO WORK ALLOWANCE

This programme is closed and is no longer available.

EMPLOYER INCENTIVES TO RECRUIT UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE

Research has shown that unemployed people who return to the workplace do so with a high degree of motivation and commitment to their jobs. If an employer is thinking of employing new staff, they may not be aware of the range of incentives and services available when recruiting unemployed people.

A number of incentives have been established which can support an employer in the creation and development of jobs. It can prove useful for both unemployed people and employers to be aware of the benefits of these incentives.

Revenue Job Assist

The Revenue Job Assist Scheme offers an employer financial incentives to recruit unemployed people through tax savings.

Employers may claim a double deduction in calculating their taxable income on:

- Qualifying employees' wages, and
- Employer's PRSI contributions for qualifying employees

This means that double the amount of the wages of a qualifying employee and double the amount of the employer's PRSI contribution for that employee can be deducted by the employer from the company's taxable income

- These deductions can be claimed for up to 3 years
- There is no limit on the number of qualifying employees an employer can take on under the scheme, providing they take up qualifying jobs.

For more information on the Revenue Job Assist Scheme contact the INOU on (01) 856 0088 or see the Revenue website: www.revenue.ie

Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme

The purpose of the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive scheme is to support job creation and incentivise employers to hire unemployed people and those on certain other social welfare payments.

The scheme exempts employers from paying their share of PRSI for certain employees for 18 months from the date they are approved for this scheme.

To qualify, both the job created and the person employed must meet certain criteria.

Qualifying Employees

To qualify an employer must employ a person who has been in receipt of one of the following Social Welfare payments for a continuous period of at least 6 months (156 days):

- Jobseeker's Benefit
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Disability Allowance

Time spent on JobBridge or the Work Placement Programme is also reckonable for eligibility purposes. An eligible person can be employed directly from either of these schemes once the required 156 days criteria has been satisfied.

- Casual work with an existing employer will not affect access to the scheme as long as the employee has a total of 6 months on a qualifying payment
- People on eligible payments can take short FÁS courses without affecting their eligibility.

Qualifying Jobs

The job must:

- Be a new and additional post or job created in 2012 – employers are not allowed to substitute existing employees to avail of the scheme
- Be for at least 30 hours per week
- Last for at least 6 months. (If the employment ends within 6 months of getting the exemption, the employers may be liable to pay the employer's PRSI contributions for that employee.)
- This scheme is limited to 5% of your existing workforce or, for smaller companies, a maximum of 5 new jobs.

How to Apply

If you have a new employee and are eligible for the scheme, fill in a **PRSI 20** form which can be downloaded from the Department of Social Protection's website: www.welfare.ie.

The employer must send the **PRSI 20** form with a **current tax clearance certificate** to the Department of Social Protection. For more information on the Employer Job (PRSI) Exemption Scheme please contact the Department of Social Protection on Locall:1890 927 999 or the INOU on (01) 856 0088.

YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK

The Minimum Wage

Since April 2000 all experienced adult workers are entitled to the national minimum hourly wage. If you are under 18, in your first job or participating in training you may be paid a reduced rate.

The National Minimum Wage rate is:

Employee	Minimum hourly rate of pay from 1st July 2011
Experienced adult worker	€8.65

It is unlawful for an employer to pay an experienced adult worker less than the minimum hourly rate of pay. If you are not being paid the proper rate

complaints can be made to the WorkPlace Relations service. The WorkPlace Relations Service can be contacted by telephone on (059) 917 8990, Locall: 1890 80 80 90 or through their website: www.workplacerelations.ie.

Minimum Notice

A regular part-time worker is entitled to the same range of employment rights as a full-time worker. A regular part-time employee is a person who has:

- Worked for at least 13 weeks with the same employer, and is normally expected to work at least eight hours a week for that employer.

You have a right to a minimum period of notice before dismissal*			
Minimum Notice	When	Minimum Notice	When
1 weeks notice	After 13 weeks	6 weeks notice	After 10-15 weeks
2 weeks notice	After 2-5 years	8 weeks notice	After 15 years
4 weeks notice	After 5-10 years	Statutory redundancy	After 2 years

*This does not apply to employees who are normally expected to work for less than eight hours a week.

You have a right to:	When?
A written statement of terms and conditions of employment	After 2 months
Protection against unfair dismissal	After 1 year
Protection against unfair dismissal resulting wholly or mainly from pregnancy, trade union membership or trade union activities	No qualifying period
From March 1st 2007, 26 weeks Maternity Benefit	No qualifying period
Time off for ante/post natal care	No qualifying period
Full (unpaid) parental leave – 14 weeks leave Reduced (unpaid) parental leave – 1 weeks leave per month of service	After 1 year After 3 months
Arrears of pay, holiday pay and certain other awards where an employer becomes insolvent (i.e. unable to pay debts) where statutory entitlement exists.	After 13 weeks

Holidays

In order to qualify for 4 weeks (20 days) annual leave, the employee must have worked:

- at least 117 hours per calendar month for the employer
- at least 1,365 hours for the same employer during the calendar year.

Employees’ holiday entitlements must be calculated by the following:

Days worked per week	Holiday
5 days	20 days
Part-time	8% of hours worked

Public Holidays

Instead of giving the public holiday, employers can give any one of the following:

- an extra days annual leave, or
- an additional day’s pay, or
- a paid day off within a month of the Bank Holiday, or
- a paid day off on the nearest church holiday.

This only applies to those who have worked a minimum of 40 hours in the 5 weeks ending on the day before the public holiday.

Where an employee does not usually work on a Bank Holiday, they are entitled to receive ⅓ of their weekly pay for that day.

For further information contact: The WorkPlace Relations Service by telephone on (059) 917 8990, Locall: 1890 80 80 90 or through their website www.workplacelrelations.ie.

WORKPLACE RELATIONS SERVICE – EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

The new WorkPlace Relations Service provides information on employment rights and employers obligations under employment, equality, equal status and industrial relations legislation and sets out the resolution and redress options available where disputes or potential contraventions arise.

The establishment of a single website to support information provision and the State's services across the employment, equality, equal status and industrial relations areas was one of a number of measures announced as part of proposals to streamline and reform public service delivery in these important areas.

The new Website, www.workplacerelations.ie, is an interim measure to gain an early single web presence and to support the phased replacement of all existing websites.

While the websites of the Labour Relations Commission, National Employment Rights Authority, Employment Appeals Tribunal, the Labour Court and the Equality Tribunal will remain in place during the lifetime of this interim website. They will be replaced in due course on the launch of the final Single Website for Workplace Relations.

As part of the process of reforming Irish Employment Rights and Industrial Relations structures, a new Single Complaint Form has been created, replacing many of the forms used by the Employment Appeals Tribunal, Labour Relations Commission, National Employment Rights Authority, Equality Tribunal and Labour Court. This new form should be used for lodging new employment-related complaints.

The Form and its Guidance Notes are available from the new WorkPlace Relations website www.workplacerelations.ie and the WorkPlace Relations Service can be contacted by telephone on telephone: (059) 917 8990 or Locall: 1890 80 80 90.

CHAPTER 5

Income Tax and Social Insurance

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Introduction

This chapter is intended as a guide only, so it is very important that you check with your local tax office to make sure you are claiming all the tax relief/credits that you are entitled to, as you may be able to claim additional allowances or credits depending on your circumstances.

In this chapter we help you calculate:

- How much income tax, social insurance and USC you will pay
- How much your 'take-home' pay will be after those deductions

Gross Pay: Salary/wages before any deductions

Net Pay: Salary/wages after deductions (Tax, PRSI, USC, etc.)

You will find contact details for the Revenue Commissioners in Chapter 7. You can access a comprehensive directory of Revenue Offices on the Revenue website: www.revenue.ie.

The Income and Health Levy

The Income Levy and the Health Levy have been replaced by the Universal Social Charge (USC).

The Universal Social Charge (USC)

People with an income below €10,036 will no longer pay the Universal Social Charge (USC). The USC charge applies to all PAYE workers, and self-employed people, with an income above €10,036.

The Universal Social Charge is payable on gross income, including notional pay (notional pay is the value of a non-cash benefit, such as benefit-in-kind), after any relief for certain capital allowances. Income from Ireland or income sourced from Ireland is subject to the Universal Social Charge. The Universal Social Charge is payable on pension contributions. Liability for the USC depends on the date of the payment rather than on when the income was earned.

You pay the Universal Social Charge if your gross income is more than €10,036 per year. Once your income is over this limit, you pay the USC on all of your income. Medical card holders who were exempt from the income levy will have to pay the USC if their income is over the exemption limit of €10,036. Although you may have no liability to income tax based on your entitlement to tax credits or by use of losses or capital allowances you may still have a liability to pay the Universal Social Charge on your income.

All Department of Social Protection payments, including Maternity Benefit and State pensions, are exempt from the Universal Social Charge. Similar payments, such as payments made as part of Community Employment schemes or the Back to Education Allowance, are also exempt.

The USC will be applied as follows to gross income of €10,036 or more:

- 2% on all gross income up to €10,036

- 4% on gross earnings between €10,036 and €16,016
- 7% on gross income in excess of €16,016

Example

John has gross income of €35,000. The USC will be paid as follows:

€10,036 at 2%	€200.72
Income between €10,036 and €16,016 (€5,980) at 4%:	€239.20
Balance (€18,984) at 7%	€1328.88
Total Universal Social Charge:	= €1,868.80

A full medical card (including a Health Amendment Act Card) allows you to qualify for the 4% rate. This does not apply to people who hold a GP Visit Card, a Drugs Payment Scheme Card, a European Health Insurance Card or a Long-term Illness Scheme Card. If a person reaches 70 years at any stage during the year they will benefit from the maximum 4% rate for the whole year.

Redundancy payments

Statutory redundancy payments are exempt from the charge. Statutory redundancy payments amount to 2 weeks' pay per year of service plus a bonus week subject to a maximum payment of €600 per week. In addition, redundancy payments above the statutory redundancy amount are exempt from the Universal Social Charge, up to certain limits. These limits are up to €10,160 plus €765 per complete year of service in excess of the statutory redundancy. This basic exemption can be further increased by up to €10,000 if the person is not a member of an occupational pension scheme.

Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI)

When you are in employment you make Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions each week, often referred to as "Stamps", which are deducted directly from your wages. These contributions provide for the payment of 'benefit' social welfare payments in the event that you become unemployed (Jobseekers Benefit) or if you are ill (Illness Benefit, etc.) and unable to work. These PRSI contributions can also count towards your contributory old age pension in the future. The PRSI and social insurance system is managed by the Department of Social Protection.

Employees:

Most employees pay a Class A PRSI contribution and are covered for all Social Welfare benefits and pensions. This applies to people in industrial, commercial and service type employment that are employed under a contract of service. It also applies to civil and public servants recruited from 6 April 1995.

Self-Employed:

Self-employed people normally pay Class S PRSI. Self-employed people do not qualify for Jobseekers Benefit or Illness Benefit. They are covered for certain pensions, Maternity and Adoptive Benefit, Guardian's Payment (Contributory) and the Bereavement Grant.

How much PRSI will I pay?

PRSI is calculated on your gross earnings, and is deducted on a weekly basis.

- Earning under €352 gross per week: You will not pay any PRSI.
- Earnings over €352.01:
 - No PRSI on the first €127,
 - 4% on income above this amount.

With the introduction of the Universal Social Charge, the employee's annual earnings ceiling has been abolished and PRSI is payable on **all** income.

If you earn over €500 per week and hold a medical card, or receive a Widow's/Widowers or Surviving Civil Partner's pension or Deserted Wife's Benefit/Allowance, you may pay a lower rate of PRSI called Subclass A2.

Once you are earning more than €38.00 per week you will still get a Class A PRSI Contribution or "stamp" as your employer will be paying social insurance for you.

Example PRSI on earnings of €400 gross per week

Gross weekly earnings	€400.00
Less weekly PRSI allowance	– €127.00
Assessable earnings	€273.00
Your PRSI contribution (4% of €273)	= €10.92

Tax and Social Welfare

Many social welfare payments are treated as taxable income. This means that if you, or your spouse/partner, earn any extra income your social welfare payment will use up either all, or some, of your tax credits.

The main Social Welfare payments that ARE taxable are:

- Jobseeker's Benefit
- Illness Benefit
- Blind Pension
- State Pension (Contributory) / (Non-Contributory)
- Guardian's Payment (Contributory) / (Non-Contributory)
- Widow / Widowers / Surviving Civil Partner's Pension
- One Parent Family Payment
- Invalidity Pension
- Deserted Wife's Benefit
- State Pension (Transition)
- Carer's Allowance
- Injury Benefit



If you are claiming a taxable social welfare payment you must notify the tax office of any additional income either you or your partner/spouse/civil partner have from earnings or other sources. The tax office will 'code-in' details of your social welfare payment and apply it to the tax charged on your other income. Any taxes due are not deducted from the social welfare payment; it is taken from your other income.

i If your only income is a social welfare payment, you will not pay tax.

Certain payments from the Department of Social Protection are not treated as taxable income.

The main Social Welfare payments that are NOT taxable are:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
- Child Benefit
- Disability Allowance
- Qualified Child increases payable with Jobseeker's Benefit and Illness Benefit
- Family Income Supplement
- Maternity Benefit
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance
- Farm Assist

Paying Tax

Most employees are **Pay As You Earn** or PAYE workers. In practice this means that any income tax you owe is deducted from your wages by your employer.

i It is your legal responsibility to ensure that your tax affairs are in order.

i Self-employed people are responsible for their own tax returns and should seek advice from the local tax office as to how the tax system operates for self-employed people.

i Unlike the social welfare system the tax system does not recognise co-habitation. This means that unless you are legally married or in a registered civil partnership you are treated as a single person for tax purposes.

Tax Credits and Tax Bands

Once you start a job the Revenue Commissioners should send you a '*Determination of Tax Credits and Standard Rate Cut-off Point Notice*'. This notice gives you the information that will allow you to work out how much tax you will pay on your earnings. The tax year runs from the 1st of January 2012 to 31st December 2012, in line with the calendar year. The two main tax rates for the tax year that started on the 1st January 2012 are 20% (standard) and 41% (higher).

The Tax Credit system

Under the 'tax credit' system your liability for tax is calculated on your total gross income. You receive 'tax credits' based on your circumstances (see tax credits). These 'tax credits' are then deducted from your overall tax liability. The tax due is calculated by adding together any applicable tax credits and subtracting them from your overall tax liability.

While this might seem a little confusing at first, follow the steps below and see

the general examples on the following pages and you will find it easier to understand.

1. Calculate your gross income.
2. Calculate your tax liability. (**See Tax Rates and Bands in this chapter**)
3. Add together any tax credits that apply to your circumstances.
4. Subtract the amount of your tax credits (step 3) from the amount of your tax liability (step 2) to identify your yearly tax bill.
5. Divide the result of step 4 by fifty-two to obtain your weekly tax bill.

You may also be able to claim other allowances depending on your circumstances – please check with your local tax office – see Chapter 7 ■ or visit the Revenue website at: www.revenue.ie

Tax Credits 2012

– Single Person's Tax Credit	€1,650
– Married Couple's Tax Credit	€3,300
– Home Carer's Tax Credit (maximum)	€810
– Widowed, qualifying for One Parent Family Tax Credit	€1,650
– Widowed (without dependent children)	€2,190
– One Parent Family Tax Credit	€1,650
– PAYE Tax Credit	€1,650

Home Carer's Allowance for Married Couples

If you are married or civil partners (who are jointly assessed for tax) and your partner is working at home to care for your children under age 18, an elderly person or someone "permanently incapacitated by reason of mental or physical infirmity", you can claim the "Home Carers" tax credit. The full tax credit is €810 per year. If the Home Carer earns income of up to €5,080 in his/her own right for the tax year, the full tax credit may be claimed. Where the income is between €5,080 and €6,700 some measure of relief will still be given. If the home carer earns €6,700 or more for a tax year, then you cannot claim the Home Carer's Tax Credit. This tax credit is not available to married couples or civil partners who are taxed as single persons.

Carer's Allowance is not taken into account when determining the home carer's income but it is a taxable source of income. This means that if you are claiming Carer's Allowance, it will make up part of your jointly assessed income.

One Parent Family Tax Credit

The One Parent Family tax credit is made up of two parts; the single person's tax credit and the lone parents tax credit.

One Parent Family tax credit

Single Persons tax credit	€1,650
One Parent Family tax credit	+ €1,650
Total tax credit =	€3,300

An additional PAYE tax credit of €1,650 can be added to give a total of €4,950 in tax credits. One Parent Families with income (including PAYE earnings and other sources) of less than €24,750 do not pay income tax

If a couple separate it is sometimes possible for both to qualify for the One Parent Family tax credit. The person seeking the Lone Parent's tax credit must prove that the child lives with her/him for whole or part of the year. If either party cohabits s/he would not qualify for the tax credit.

PAYE

Pay As You Earn (PAYE) income tax is charged on a tax yearly basis (unlike PRSI, Income Levy and Health Contribution) so your tax credits are averaged out over the tax year. It is important to remember that if you take up a job at any stage in the tax year, you can still avail of your full annual allocation of tax credits. This is called 'cumulative' tax credits. You cannot carry credits into the next year.

Income from any source including employment, self-employment, pensions and some social welfare payments will be assessed for tax purposes.

- Every employee who is a Pay As You Earn (PAYE) worker receives an additional PAYE tax credit of €1,650 per year. Certain conditions may apply to proprietary directors, their spouses and children of proprietary directors – contact the Revenue Commissioners for more information. People availing of the Tax Exemption Limits have their PAYE credit already included in the Exemption Limits
- If you are paying a mortgage you are entitled to tax relief, which is applied at source i.e. the bank or building society credits tax relief and in this manner you get the relief. First-time buyers in 2012 will get mortgage interest relief at a rate of 25% for the first 2 tax years, reducing after that, with the appropriate first-time buyer ceilings. Non-first-time buyers in 2012 will get mortgage interest relief at a rate of 15% from 2012 until 2017. A special rate of 30% for the tax years 2012 to 2017 is being introduced for first-time buyers who bought their sole or main residence for the first time in the years 2004 to 2008 or paid their first mortgage interest payment in this period
- There are a variety of personal credits available for widowed people, depending on the year of bereavement and the number of dependent children.
- There are additional credits available for blind people, those with dependant relatives, incapacitated children and those who are incapacitated and

employing a carer. There is also relief available for medical expenses, contributions to pension schemes and health insurance which is applied at source.

Example 1:

A single person with no children who is a PAYE worker has a personal tax credit made up of the following:

Single Person's tax credit	€1,650.00
PAYE tax credit	+ <u>€1,650.00</u>
Total tax credits per year	€3,300.00
Total tax credits per week	€63.46



At present, single people with a total annual income of up to €16,500 (including PAYE earnings and other sources) do not pay income tax. If their income exceeds €10,036 they **ARE** subject to the Universal Social Charge.

Example 2:

A couple or civil partners with no children, where one partner is a PAYE worker, has a personal tax credit made up of the following:

Married couple/civil partner's tax credit	€3,300.00
PAYE tax credit	+ <u>€1,650.00</u>
Total tax credits per year	€4,950.00
Total tax credits per week	€95.19



At present, married couples and civil partners with one partner working and with a total annual income of up to €24,750 (including PAYE earnings and other sources) do not pay income tax. They **will** pay the Universal Social Charge.

Example 3:

A married couple or civil partners with no children, where both partners are PAYE workers, has a personal tax credit made up of the following:

Married couple/civil partner's tax credit	€3,300.00
PAYE tax credit (single credit of €1,830 x 2)	+ <u>€3,300.00</u>
Home carer's credit	€6,600.00
Total tax credits per week	€126.92



At present, married couples and civil partners with both partners working and with a total annual income of up to €33,000 (including two PAYE earnings and other income sources) do not pay income tax. They **will** pay the Universal Social Charge.

Example 4:

A married couple or civil partners with a child, where one partner is a PAYE worker and the other is a home carer, has a personal tax credit made up of the following:

Married couple/civil partner's tax credit	€3,300.00
PAYE tax credit	+ €1,650.00
Home carer's credit	<u>+ €810.00</u>
Total tax credits per year	€5,760.00
Total tax credits per week	€110.76



At present, married couples and civil partners with one partner working and one partner caring for a child/children or elderly person in the home and with a total income of up to €28,800 (including PAYE earnings and other income sources) do not pay income tax. They **will** pay the Universal Social Charge.

Revenue Job Assist

If you are unemployed for one year or more and take up a job you may be entitled to an additional tax-free allowance under Revenue Job Assist. The scheme runs for three years and the tax-free allowance is tapered out over the three-year period at the following rates:

Revenue Job Assist — tax free allowances

Year 1:	€3,810	plus	€1,270 for each child dependant
Year 2:	€2,540	plus	€850 for each child dependant
Year 3:	€1,270	plus	€425 for each child dependant

The Revenue Job Assist allowances are not restricted to the standard rate of tax and are subtracted from the tax owed on your gross taxable income. To qualify for Revenue Job Assist you will have to satisfy certain conditions (see Chapter 4 ■ for details). Your employer will also receive tax relief.

Income Tax Rates and Bands

There are two main rates of income tax, the 20% standard rate and the 41% higher rate. To work out how much of your income will be taxed at 20% and how much will be taxed at 41% you need to look at the income tax bands.

Tax Rates/Bands 2012

Single and widowed people without children	€32,800 @ 20%	balance @ 41%
Single and widowed people with children qualifying for:		
One Parent Family tax Credit	€36,800 @ 20%	balance @ 41%
Married couple/civil partners with one income	€41,800 @ 20%	balance @ 41%
Married couple/civil partners with two incomes	€65,600.(Max) @ 20%	balance @ 41%

i The standard rate cut-off point for married couples/civil partners for 2012 is €41,800 subject to an increase of up to €27,400 where both persons are working. The increase is limited to the lower of €23,800 or the amount of the income of the spouse with the smaller income. The increase in the standard rate cut-off point interacts with the Home Carer's Tax Credit. However, if the increased standard rate cut-off point is more beneficial, you can claim the increased standard rate cut-off point instead of the Home Carer's Tax Credit. In practice your Regional Revenue Office will grant you whichever is the more beneficial.

Once your income goes over a certain level, you will start paying tax at the higher rate of 41%. This level is called a "tax band". Different tax bands apply to different types of household. For example:

- A single person earning €26,000 per year will be taxed at the 20% rate only, if his/her income is less than €32,800 per year. All of the income will be subject to the Universal Social Charge.
- A single person earning €40,000 will have the first €32,800 of his/her income taxed at the 20% rate and the balance of €7,200 taxed at 41% rate. All of the income will be subject to the Universal Social Charge.

The examples below give you a more in-depth idea of how the calculations are made (they do not include PRSI calculations):

Example 5:

John is single, with no child dependants. He is a PAYE worker and earns €22,000 gross per year. John's tax bill is calculated as follows (not including PRSI):

John's taxable earnings	€22,000.00
- taxed @ 20% standard rate =	€4,400.00
Tax due before John's tax credits are deducted	€4,400.00
Single Person's Tax credit	€1,650.00
Plus PAYE credit	<u>+ €1,650.00</u>
John's total tax credits	€3,300.00
Tax owed before credits deducted	€4,400.00
Minus John's total tax credits	<u>- €3,300.00</u>
John's tax bill per year	€1,100.00

Universal Social Charge

€10,036 at 2%	€200.72
€16,016 – €10,036 (€5,980) at 4%	€239.20
Balance (€5,980) at 7%	€418.86
Total Universal Social Charge	€858.78
Combined PAYE and Universal Social Charge	€1,958.78
John's tax per week (€1,958.78 divided by 52)	€37.67

Example 6:

Michael is single, with no child dependants. He is a PAYE worker and earns €40,000 gross per year. Michael's tax bill is calculated as follows (not including PRSI):

Michael's taxable earnings	€40,000.00
Michael's earnings taxable at the standard rate = €32,800.00	
— taxed @ 20% standard rate =	€6,560.00
Michael's earnings taxable at the higher rate = €7,200.00	
— taxed @ 41% higher rate =	<u>+ €2,952.00</u>
Total tax due before Michael's tax credits are deducted	€9,512.00
Single Person's Tax credit	€1,650.00
Plus PAYE credit	<u>+ €1,650.00</u>
Michael's total tax credits	€3,300.00
Tax owed before credits deducted	€9,512.00
Minus Michael's total tax credits	<u>- €3,300.00</u>
Michael's tax bill per year	€6,212.00

Universal Social Charge

€10,036 at 2%	€200.72
€16,016 - €10,036 (€5,980) at 4%	€239.20
Balance (€23,984) at 7%	€1,678.88
Total Universal Social Charge	€2,118.80
Michael's total yearly tax liability (PAYE + USC)	€8,330.80
Michael's tax per week (€8,330.00 divided by 52)	€160.21

Tax Exemption Scheme

There is a tax exemption scheme of benefit to people over 65 with incomes below certain limits.

Income Tax Exemption Limits for 2012

Single/widowed	€18,000
Married couple / civil partners	€36,000
Qualified child increases	
— First child	€575
— Second child	€575
— Third and subsequent children	€830



You cannot avail of the Tax Exemption Scheme and Revenue Job Assist at the same time.

Childminding Relief

Where an individual minds up to three children in the minder's own home, no tax will be payable on the childminding earnings providing the amount is less than €15,000 per annum. If the income exceeds that amount income will be taxable, as normal, under self-assessment. The exemption must be claimed in the annual return and must be accompanied by evidence that the service provider has notified the appropriate person, recognised by the Health Service Executive (HSE), that they are providing child-minding services.

Marginal Relief

If you are availing of the Tax Exemption Scheme and your annual income goes over the scheme's limits, you will pay tax at 40% on the additional income. This is called Marginal Relief. Although this is a very high rate of tax, the Tax Exemption Scheme may be of benefit to some people whose total income only slightly exceeds the limit. It is important that you check with the tax office to find out if the Tax Exemption Limits are better for you. For further information see leaflet IT8 – 'Tax Exemption and Marginal Relief' (Revenue Commissioners).

Redundancy and the Universal Social Charge

Statutory redundancy payments are exempt from the USC. In addition, ex-gratia redundancy payments in excess of the statutory redundancy amount are exempt from income tax, and therefore also the USC, up to certain limits. These limits are up to €10,160 plus €765 per complete year of service in excess of the statutory redundancy. The basic exemption as outlined above can be further increased by up to €10,000 if the person is not a member of an occupational pension scheme.

Examples to show how much tax you might pay

The following examples offer a guide to help you work out your tax. It is important to remember to talk to someone in your local tax office to ensure that you are claiming all the tax credits you are entitled to.

Example 7:

Tom and Jane are married with 3 children. Tom had been claiming JA for over 12 months, but is now taking up a job with an annual salary of €27,500 and overtime of €4,500. Tom has also qualified for Revenue Job Assist. Jane remains at home caring for their children. Tom's tax bill is calculated as follows;

Calculating PAYE

Tom and Jane's gross income (Wages + Overtime)

€32,000.00

Taxed @ 20% standard rate	€6,400.00
Tom and Jane's tax owed before tax credits are deducted	€6,400.00
Tom's Revenue Job Assist personal allowance	€3,810.00
Revenue Job Assist child allowance (€1,270 x 3)	€3,810.00
Revenue Job Assist total	€7,620.00
@ 20% standard rate	€1,524.00
Married couple's tax credit	€3,300.00
Plus Tom's PAYE tax credit	€1,650.00
Plus Revenue Job Assist credit	€1,524.00
Plus Jane's home carer's tax credit	<u>€810.00</u>
Tom and Jane's total tax credits	€7,284.00
Tax owed before credit deducted	€6,400.00
Minus tax credits	<u>- €7,284.00</u>
Tom and Jane's tax bill per year	€0.00
The Universal Social Charge (USC):	
€10,036 @ 2%	€200.72
€32,000 - €10,036 (€21,964) @ 4%	€878.56
Total USC	€1,079.28

Note: Tom and Jane's Tax Credits were more than their PAYE owed, so they do not have to pay any PAYE. The Revenue Job Assist tax allowance is reduced over a three-year period. In the second year it reduces to two thirds and reduces to one third in the third and final year. Income over €16,016 calculated at 4% because Tom has a medical card.

Calculating PRSI

Tom's gross weekly income (€32,000 ÷ 52)	€615.38
Minus weekly PRSI allowance	<u>- €127.00</u>
PRSI assessable weekly income	€488.38
PRSI @ 4% of assessable earnings (Sub-class A2)	<u>x .04</u>
Weekly PRSI deduction	€19.54
Annual PRSI deduction (€19.54 x 52)	€1,016.08

Calculating Tom's net annual income after PAYE, PRSI and USC

Tom and Jane's total gross annual income	€32,000.00
Minus PAYE	- €0.00
Minus PRSI	- €1,016.08
Minus Universal Social Charge (USC)	- <u>€1,079.28</u>
Tom and Jane's net annual income	€29,904.64

Tom and Jane's net weekly income (€29,904.64 divided by 52) = €575.09



***Note:** Because Tom was claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for over 12 months, he will keep his Medical Card entitlement for three years. When Tom no longer qualifies for Revenue Job Assist, he will no longer be eligible for a Medical Card.

CHAPTER 6

Training and Education Options

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Introduction

Thousands of adults have successfully returned to education and training to learn new skills, develop existing abilities and improve their chances of getting the job they want.

In this chapter we identify the range of training and education opportunities available to unemployed people and explain how you can take up education or training while keeping your social welfare payment.

In addition we look at what you can do and where you can go to find help or guidance with literacy issues.

Return to Work Courses

These courses are for people who have been out of the work place for a long time – e.g. women who have spent the last number of years working in the home. These courses concentrate on personal development and skills training (contact your local Department of Social Protection office for details).

The Work Placement Programme

The Work Placement Programme is a Government supported programme that brings employers and the unemployed together for a work experience placement for a maximum duration of nine months.

If you are unemployed and have not secured paid work, the programme allows you to apply your existing skills and gain new competencies and valuable experience in a workplace setting.

Is the Work Placement Programme only for Graduates or can Non-Graduates Apply?

Yes, the Work Placement Programme is open to Graduates and Non Graduates e.g.

- **Stream 1** — aimed at Graduates who have been awarded a qualification at Level 7 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications
- **Stream 2** — aimed at those who are unemployed for three months

Will I get Paid?

There is no payment for a placement on the Work Placement Programme. However, if you are in receipt of a Social Welfare Payment, you can retain this payment.

How Can I find out more?

You can log onto www.fas.ie or drop into your local Department of Social Protection office.

Training

This section outlines 3 different types of training options. These are:

- Industry related training
- Training for people with disabilities
- Training for young people

The content, style and certification of training courses will differ from course to course. Weigh up your options to make sure you choose the course that suits you best. Your life experience and work experience may help you get on to certain courses. If you are not ready for specific job related training then a Return to Work Course may be the best option for you.

SOLAS

A new further education and training authority called SOLAS (Seirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna) is to be established. FÁS will be disbanded. Participants on current FÁS and further education courses will not be affected by the establishment of SOLAS and will continue their courses under the new authority. Until this change all training/courses will continue to be called FÁS training courses.

A. Industry Related Training

FÁS Specific Skills Training Courses

FÁS run a large number and range of training courses through its national network of training centres.

These courses are run in the daytime and evenings, with some Safe Pass courses run on Saturdays. They are aimed at people who wish to acquire new skills or up-date existing skills. There are a vast range of Specific Skills and Traineeship courses available including office/computer based, electronics, business, construction, personal services, pre-employment/job clubs and many others (Visit the FÁS website for a full listing www.fas.ie).

The duration of Courses can vary, but typically last 4-6 months. To apply, register with your local Department of Social Protection office where you will receive a guidance interview to determine the most relevant training available for you. Most FÁS courses are certified with FETAC Awards or other vocational awarding body certificates.



Priority on daytime courses are for people who are unemployed, other applicants may be identified through the guidance interview. The evening time and Saturday courses are open to everyone, but in most cases there is a fee.

FÁS Training Allowances

Persons participating in FÁS Training Schemes may be entitled to a FÁS training allowance.

Jobseekers Benefit/Jobseekers Allowance: Your payment is suspended but you will get a FÁS training allowance of the same amount.

You will get a training bonus of €20 per week if you: have been getting Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance for 12 months or more; are progressing from at least 12 months on a Community Employment (CE) scheme or Job Initiative (JI) programme; or have been involved in a combination of the above, for example, if you have been getting Jobseeker's Benefit for 6 months and have been on a Community Employment scheme for another 6 months of the previous year.

Disability Allowance or Blind Pension: Your Disability Allowance or Blind Pension is suspended but you will get a FÁS training allowance of the same amount. You will get a training bonus of €20 per week. You will keep any secondary benefits, such as your medical card or travel pass.

Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension: If your FÁS training course is for **19 ½ hours per week or less** you will keep your Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension – you must get an exemption from the Department of Social Protection authorising you to do the FÁS course. You will get a FÁS training allowance. You will not get a training bonus. You will keep your secondary benefits.

If your FÁS training course is for **more than 19 ½ hours per week** you will need to transfer to the Partial Capacity Benefit (PCB) – see chapter 4 for more information on Partial Capacity Benefit. You will get a FÁS training allowance in addition to your Partial Capacity Benefit payment.

One-Parent Family Payment: You will keep your One-Parent Family Payment (but it will be reduced as your FÁS training allowance will be assessed against it as income). You will get a FÁS training allowance. You will not get a training bonus of €20 per week, unless you are progressing from at least 12 months on a CE Scheme or Job Initiative programme.

Please Note: If your present Social Welfare payment is above the FÁS personal rate, then FÁS will increase the training allowance to match your Social Welfare payment.

While on a daytime FÁS training course you are entitled to:

Personal Rate	Full- time	Part-time
18 yrs. and over	€188.00	€108.20
17 years	€95.75	€ 55.10
16 years	€76.65	€44.10

Persons who declare they have a disability on registration with FÁS will be considered a priority case for training. Any specialist equipment/adaptation that a disabled trainee may require, FÁS will endeavour to have in place before commencement of training, if prior notice has been given. Any such

requirements should be discussed with your Employment Services Officer.

- If you have been in receipt of Carer's Allowance for 12 months or more before starting the course you will receive an additional €20.00 weekly allowance while on the course.
- Some money **may be paid towards** accommodation costs if you are living away from home during the course. The maximum rates are – Daily Rate €13.98 Weekly Rate €69.90.
- A travel allowance may be paid if the Training Centre is three or more miles or five kilometres or more from where you live.
- A lunch allowance of €4.00 a week may be paid to full time course participants (for lunch outside the Training Centre).
- If the partner of a person who is claiming a Social Welfare payment takes part on a FÁS non-craft training course then the qualified adult portion of the Social Welfare payment is automatically lost – but the person on the course will receive a training allowance.
- If you are claiming a Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement, talk to your Department of Social Protection Representative before taking up the course (see Chapter 2 for Rent Supplement Assessments).

How to apply

You must be registered with and apply through your local Department of Social Protection office to participate in any of their training courses. Your Employment Services Officer (ESO) at your local Department of Social Protection office can advise you on the range of training options available to you. Following a guidance interview you can be referred or booked on a relevant course and FÁS will contact you when a place becomes available. You should keep in regular contact with your ESO about training opportunities. The interview with your local ESO will assist you in looking at the options available.

Traineeship Programme

Traineeships are skill development programmes run in partnership between FÁS and employers in many sub-sectors of employment. They seek to use the best match of FÁS Certificates in named occupations by FETAC the Further Education and Training Awards Council.

Industry agreed standards for in-company training is reflected in the work place training record, which specifies the workplace training elements. The structure of the programme and recognition of its certification enables participants to progress to further training, education and employment opportunities and supports the development of clear “career paths” for individuals in an occupational field. Standard FÁS training allowances are paid. Employer resources and expertise are utilised to provide a quality-training programme for unemployed people.

Traineeships comprise training in a FÁS or FÁS approved training centre

combined with training in the workplace with a host employer. Research has shown that Traineeship enjoys a very high rate of work placement for programme participants.

Essential elements of Traineeships include the involvement of employers in the selection of trainees, development of the curriculum, certification and on-the-job training. Training is standards based and leads to the award of National Skills qualification.

Apprenticeships

The apprenticeship programme consisting of 7 phases of education and training for employed apprentices, with a minimum time period for each phase of training and an overall minimum period of generally 4 years in employment required to be completed by the apprentice in the specified trade. These alternating phases of training typically consist of three off-the-job phases and four on-the-job phases. The duration of three off-the-job training phases does not generally exceed 40 weeks. Apprentices are provided, during the training periods, with the skills, knowledge and competence required to perform effectively as a craftworker in industry.

To obtain an apprenticeship you must:

- be at least 16 years old **and**
- have at least a grade D in any 5 subjects in the Junior Certificate Examination (or equivalent grades in other approved examinations), **and**
- you must obtain employment as an apprentice in your chosen occupation. Your employer must be approved by FÁS and must register you as an apprentice within 2 weeks of recruitment.

In certain crafts, apprenticeship applicants are required to pass a colour vision test approved by FÁS

If you do not meet these requirements there are a number of ways in which it is still possible to qualify for an apprenticeship.

- You can satisfactorily complete a Pre-Apprenticeship course approved by FÁS.

Or

- You may qualify if you are 18 years of age or over, have a minimum of 3 years work experience acceptable to FÁS in a designated industry activity and are successful at an assessment interview.



A special Bursary Payment of €2,667 aimed at encouraging women into apprenticeships is available, please contact your local FÁS office for further information.

FÁS will endeavour to have in place before commencement of training any appropriate specialist equipment/adaptation that a disabled trainee may require, if prior notice has been given. Any such requirements should be discussed with your FÁS Senior Training Advisor.

Redundancy and Apprentices

FÁS, with the support of the Social Partners, is providing a temporary Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme for apprentices who have been made redundant due to the reduction in the economic activity.

The purpose of the Redundant Apprentice Placement Scheme is to give eligible redundant apprentices the opportunity to complete on-the-job phases 3, 5 and 7 to enable them progress in their apprenticeship. Contact FÁS for more information.

Teagasc

Teagasc is Ireland's agricultural and food development authority. It provides research, advisory and training services to the agricultural and food industry.

There are fees for meals and accommodation at residential courses. Teagasc pay the colleges a maintenance grant but students must pay the balance. There is no fee for non-residential students. There is a fee for courses that do not have a residential option. There are no minimum education entry requirements for Teagasc courses.

After completing their first year, students should obtain a FETAC Level Four Vocational Certificate and can usually go on to study for a second year to earn a FETAC Level Five Certificate. For more details, contact TEAGASC at (059) 917 0200.

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)

BIM is the agency responsible for vocational training of personnel in all sectors of the Irish seafood industry. Training is provided through a coastal training service, which encompasses the National Fisheries College, the Regional Fisheries Centre and two mobile Coastal training Units. For more information on training and education services available contact BIM at (01) 214 4100.

Fáilte Ireland

Fáilte Ireland is the National Tourism Development Authority to guide and promote the evolution of tourism as a leading indigenous component of the Irish economy.

– Skills Training

The Skills Training Division provides entry-level skills for those joining the tourism industry. Typically these training programmes are offered in a variety of formats and cover key operational areas such as culinary skills, restaurant services skills, and bartending skills.

Programmes are run at Failte Ireland's permanent Training Centres in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford. A number of temporary training centres are regularly established at other regional locations each year in conjunction with community groups, Area Partnerships, and industry organisations. Core elements of the service include:

Accredited training: These programmes lead to a recognised award from the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). In most cases successful graduating trainees will be able to pursue their education to a higher award level in the Institute of Technology sector.

Return to Work: All programmes support those wishing to secure the skills required to get back into full-time or part-time employment. Related to this is a growing interest in programmes that equip third level students with some of the elementary skills required to work safely on a part-time basis in tourism and hospitality.

For more information on courses call Failte Irelands' "People in Tourism" centre on callsave 1850 256 256.

B. Training for People with Disabilities

FÁS training courses are available for people with Disabilities. In addition, there are 53 Specialist Training Providers contracted by FÁS to provide training courses exclusively for people with disabilities as some people with disabilities may require additional supports to meet their training needs e.g. longer duration of training, adaptation of the training approach and facilities.

On a FÁS course, delivered by either a Specialist Training Provider or a FÁS Training Centre, please note the following;

- If you are in receipt of Disability Allowance or Blind Person's Pension, FÁS will pay a training allowance equivalent to your social welfare payment for the duration of your attendance on the course. In addition, FÁS will pay you a training bonus.
- If you are in receipt of Illness Benefit or Invalidity Pension, you must obtain an exemption from the Rules of Behaviour from the Department of Social Protection before you can engage in FÁS training. Provided you have obtained this exemption, you will retain your social welfare payments in addition to receiving the FÁS training allowance. However, you will not receive the FÁS training bonus.
- Participants on FÁS training courses continue to receive any secondary benefits they were in receipt of before taking up the FÁS training course. Also, the Department of Social Protection will restore your social welfare payment, if, for any reason you are unable to continue your training.

For further information contact your local Department of Social Protection office.

C. Training for Young People

Youthreach

Youthreach is an integrated programme of education, training and work experience, introduced jointly by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) with FÁS in 1989, for young people between 15 to 20 years of age who have left school early without any qualifications or vocational training. There are almost 6,000 places available nationwide under the Youthreach umbrella, all funded by DES. Almost 3,700 of these are operated by VECs in around 100 Youthreach centres and the majority of the remainder are operated by FÁS in around 40 Community Training Centres (CTCs).

The programme usually provides two years integrated education, training and work experience, although they can be flexible, depending on your individual needs. The length of the course depends on both the starting point of the individual and the level of certification the person wishes to attain. A training allowance is paid to trainees, depending on age.

Basic skills training, practical work training and general education are features of the programme, and the application of new technology is integrated into all aspects of programme content. There is a strong emphasis on personal development, on the core skills of literacy/numeracy, communications and IT, along with a choice of vocational options and a work experience programme.

Courses can lead to a FETAC qualification, to the Junior or Leaving Certificate. For further information contact your local VEC or FÁS.

– Payments to Youthreach participants

Participants are paid the basic FÁS training allowance, a lunch allowance and may also qualify for a travel allowance. If you have been in receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance for 12 months, you will receive an additional weekly allowance of €20.00 while on the course.

Skills Foundation Programme

Courses on this programme provide basic skills training and last for up to 7 months. Participants may then move on to mainstream FÁS training courses.

Local Training Initiatives (LTIs)

Local Training Initiatives are set up by FÁS in order to help local communities carry out valuable projects to benefit their communities while at the same time providing work experience and training for participants. Participants receive the standard FÁS training allowance and all training on LTI's leads to FETAC certification. These projects are full-time, 35 hours a week and the duration of the projects vary. Participants must be unemployed and over 16 years of age.

Community Training Centres (CTCs)

FÁS fund CTC's, which are managed by local voluntary boards representing the community. These Centres provide work experience and training for early school leavers, between 16 and 21 years of age, in their local communities. If you take up this option you will be paid the standard FÁS training allowance.

Education

The rest of this chapter explores a range of options available if you are considering returning to education. These options will allow you to keep your Social Welfare payment while studying.

Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI)

This initiative provides information and guidance regarding adult education opportunities to people attending the Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme, Back To Education Initiative, literacy schemes and those participating in other adult and community education programmes. The service is also available to survivors of residential abuse and their families. There are currently 40 projects operating nationwide.

The AEGI service offers information, advice and guidance on an individual and group basis in respect of personal, educational and career guidance and covers the pre-entry, entry, ongoing and pre-exit stages. The development of the guidance service in education provides an important contact point for providers in the FÁS Employment Services. You should contact your local VEC for further information for opportunities in further education or for further information about the AEGI, contact the National Centre for Guidance in Education (01) 869 0715 or the Further Education Section at the Department of Education and Skills (090) 648 3600.

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

VTOS is a second chance education initiative designed specifically for the unemployed. It is funded by the DES and operated by VECs. There are 5,000 places available on VTOS. To be eligible to participate on a VTOS you must be:

- aged 21 or over and
- In receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit/Jobseeker's Allowance, Illness Benefit (subject to the approval of the Department of Social Protection) One Parent Family Payment, Invalidity Pension or Disability Allowance for 6 months
- Signing for PRSI 'Credits' for at least 6 months
- The spouse/partner of somebody claiming one of these payments for 6 months
- People in receipt of Carer's Allowance who have ceased caring responsibilities
- Time spent on a FÁS training course or CE scheme can count towards the six-month qualifying period. Periods spent on Job Initiative, Youthreach programmes or time spent in prison can count towards this six-month qualifying period, but a person must be getting one of the relevant Social Welfare payments before starting the programme
- People in receipt of the following categories of payments are also eligible to join VTOS provided they are at least 21 years of age and have not been engaged in paid work for at least six months: One Parent Family Payment,

Blind Person's Pension; Deserted Wife's Allowance / Benefit; Widow / Widower's Contributory / Non-Contributory Pension; Prisoner's Wife's Allowance.

Payment on VTOS

- There are no course fees
- You will be paid a standard rate each week - equal to the maximum rate of Jobseeker's Benefit, which is €188.00 for a single person in place of JA/JB. People in receipt of other categories of payment will continue to receive payment from the Department of Social Protection
- You will not receive a payment if you are signing on for PRSI 'credits' only.
- If you work part-time or casually during your studies, this will not affect your payment.
- If on JA/JB you will no longer have to "sign on"
- Travel and meal allowances are paid at FÁS rates
- An additional allowance of €20.00 is payable if you have been in receipt of qualifying Social Welfare payment for at least one year directly before participating in VTOS.
- Some assistance with book and course materials may be provided

If you receive a rent/mortgage interest supplement and take up part-time work while on VTOS, Rent Supplement Assessment rules will apply, i.e. disregard the first €75 of income from employment and then disregard 25% of the remaining balance. Any income left after this 25% disregard is counted against your rent/mortgage interest supplement – See Chapter 2 for details.



If you receive the additional allowance of €20.00 on VTOS (see box above) and take up part-time work, the rent/mortgage interest supplement earnings disregard of €75.00 will be reduced from €75.00 to €55.00

Childcare

People on VTOS, Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Programmes may be able to access subsidised childcare under the Childcare Education and Training Scheme (CETS) provided by the new Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Contact your local VEC or Childcare Committee for more information.

Studying on VTOS

Programmes offered under VTOS are education-led, vocationally-oriented and progression-focussed. The programmes give participants the opportunity of:

- raising their education levels
- gaining certification with the National Framework of Qualifications
- developing knowledge and skills relevant to the workplace **and**
- progressing to employment or to further education or training leading to employment.

The range of learning opportunities provided by VTOS centres include:

- Junior Certificate
- Leaving Certificate and
- Courses leading to FETAC and equivalent awards at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

A variety of subject areas is offered at Junior and Leaving Certificate levels. Vocational designations covered in the FETAC awards are chosen from a wide range of designations, including new technologies, commerce, media, engineering, administration, theatre, arts craft and design.

How to apply

- Contact your local VEC, AEGI, local LES or your local Library
- VTOS courses usually begin in September/October, but it may be possible to start at other times.
- Each VEC has a VTOS Co-ordinator who can assist you with information and advice on suitable courses

Post Leaving Certificate Programme (PLC)

The Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) programme provides an integrated general education, vocational training and work experience programme for young people who have completed their Leaving Certificate, adults returning to education and the unemployed who are seeking to upskill in order to enhance their prospects of gaining employment. Its purpose is to enhance their prospects of gaining employment or progressing to further or higher education.

Post Leaving Certificate courses are full-time one year programmes of integrated education, training and work experience provided in schools and colleges outside the third level sector.

National Certification at FETAC Levels 5 and 6 or equivalent is available and the courses cover a large range of options e.g., Business and Secretarial Skills, Computer Studies, Art Craft and Design, Multi-Media, Child-care and Community Care, Sport and Leisure, Tourism and Catering. PLC courses are provided predominantly in the VEC sector, but some Community and Comprehensive schools and Secondary Schools also offer courses.

Applicants should contact their local VEC or school offering PLC courses.

Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)

The Back to Education Initiative provides for an expansion of flexible part-time options across Further Education. Its priority is to increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper second level education in a range of part-time accredited learning opportunities leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) to facilitate their access, transfer and progression to other education or employment pathways. The programme's aim is to give adults who wish to return to education an opportunity to combine their return to learning with family, work and other responsibilities. It offers Post-Leaving Certificate, VTOS and Youthreach programmes on a part-time basis. Courses are free for any adult with a less than upper second level education.

Courses offered can include subjects in the Junior or Leaving Certificate and a wide range of modules such as Communications, Personal Development, Business, Computing, Childcare, Art and Craft, Tourism, Catering, Sport and Leisure Etc. For information contact the Adult Education Officer, Community Education Facilitator or Adult Guidance Information Officer at your local VEC

Adult Literacy

The Adult Literacy scheme is funded by the Department of Education and Skills and delivered by Vocational Education Committees (VECs) nationwide. It focuses on those with low levels of literacy skills and includes English language tuition (ESOL) for adult immigrants and basic education services. Adult literacy, in addition to reading and writing, now extends to such basic education as numeracy, social and personal development, learning to learn and IT skills.

The adult literacy service is free and confidential. It is available as a stand-alone tuition programme in a variety of formats (intensive, family, workplace) and for specific cohorts (deaf people, people with dyslexia and native Irish speakers in Gaeltacht areas).

For more information contact your local VEC.

Community Education

Community Education refers to education and learning, generally outside the formal education sector, with the aims of enhancing learning, empowerment and contributing to civic society. It is firmly community-based, with local groups taking responsibility for, and playing a key role in, organising courses and deciding on programme-content.

Community Education is funded by the Department of Education and Skills, who provide annual grants to Vocational Education Committees (VECs) to set up educational programmes and distribute funds. Funding is usually allocated through the provision of tutor hours, or small grants, to a range of community and voluntary groups for educational activities.

For more information contact your local VEC.

Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)

The Department of Social Protection administers the Back to Education Allowance. This scheme allows you to keep your Social Welfare payment and return to approved full-time second and third level courses. The approved full time education course must lead to a higher qualification on the national framework Qualifications other than that all ready held. There are two education options available.

- Second level option
- Third level option

Redundancy

If you are awarded statutory redundancy under Irish legislation, you can have immediate access to the BTEA (or within one year of the award of the statutory redundancy) without the requirement that you be in receipt of a qualifying payment. You must be entitled to a qualifying social welfare payment before starting the course, it is not necessary to actually be receiving the payment to qualify.

Second Level Option (SLO)

You can attend a second level course of education at any community, comprehensive, secondary or vocational school, with which the Department of Education has a funding relationship. The course must be full-time and lead to a certificate recognised by the Department of Education & Skills or approved by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), e.g. Junior Cert., Leaving Cert., Post-Leaving Cert. or foundation/access courses at Universities or Institutes of Technology or a City and Guilds Certificate.

Other Second Level BTEA options

- Certain City & Guilds courses
- Foundation/Access courses at Universities or Institutes of Technology
- Business & Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses

Please check with the school or college before you take up the course.

Third Level Option (TLO)

You can attend a third level course of education at any university, third level college or institution, provided that the course is a full-time day course of study and is approved under any of the following:

- The Department of Education & Skills for Student Grant scheme, or
- The Vocational Educational Committee's Scholarship Scheme, or
- The Third Level Maintenance Grant Scheme for Trainees, or
- If it receives Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) recognition

BTEA Postgraduate option

If you already have an undergraduate third-level qualification, (i.e. you already have a degree) your application for a BTEA while pursuing post-graduate education will only be considered if you are doing a Higher Diploma in any discipline or the Professional Diploma in Education (Primary or Secondary teaching only). (Only Postgraduate courses in Ireland are eligible for the BTEA). Under no circumstances will the BTEA be awarded to a person who already holds a postgraduate qualification.



You are advised to check with Department of Social Protection before taking up any further education options.

Payment on the BTEA

The Back to Education Allowance will only be paid for the 9-month academic year for those in receipt of Jobseeker's payments. It is NOT payable for the 3-month summer period between academic years. BTEA participants who are unable to find employment during the summer period may be entitled to claim an unemployment payment. They will be required to satisfy the normal qualifying conditions, including the standard 'Genuinely Seeking Work' conditions – see Chapter 1.

Monitoring Arrangements

You must provide the Department of Social Protection with a certificate from the school/college confirming your registration as a full time student, commencement date and attendance at the course. You must supply this information to DSP before payment on the BTEA 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.

Who is eligible for the Back to Education Allowance?

You will be eligible for the Back to Education Allowance if you are:

- Aged 21 and in receipt of one of the qualifying payments, **or**
- Aged 18 and in receipt of a (specified) disability payment, **or**
- Aged between 18 and 21 years of age and out of formal education for at least two years, **or**
- Awarded Statutory Redundancy payment and are entitled to one of the qualifying social welfare payments.

Second Level option (SLO)

- Aged 21 or over getting one of the following payments for at least 3 months (78 days of unemployment): Jobseekers Allowance, Jobseekers Benefit, Farm Assist, One-Parent Family Payment, Deserted Wife's Allowance/Benefit, Widow's/Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory or Non-Contributory pension, Prisoners' Wife's Allowance or Carers Allowance (under 66 years)

- Aged 18 or over and getting one of the following payments for at least 3 months Blind Pension, Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension or Incapacity Supplement; **or**
- Aged between 18-20 and out of formal education for two years and getting one of the following payments for at least 3 months; Jobseekers Benefit, Jobseekers Allowance or One-Parent Family Payment **or**
- Aged 18 or over and in receipt of Illness Benefit for 2 years or more

Third Level option (TLO)

- Aged 21 or over and getting one of the following payments for at least 9 months (234 days): Jobseeker's Allowance, Jobseeker's Benefit, Farm Assist, One-Parent Family Payment, Deserted Wife's Allowance / Benefit, Widow's/ Widower's Contributory, Non-Contributory pension, Prisoners Wife's Allowance or Carers Allowance
- Aged 18 or over and getting one of the following payments for at least 12 months; Blind Pension, Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension or Incapacity Supplement **or**
- Aged between 18 and 20 and out of formal education for two years and getting one of the following payments for at least 9 months (234 days); JB, JA or One-Parent Family Payment **or**
- Aged 18 or over and in receipt of Illness Benefit for 2 years or more



Under no circumstances will the BTEA be awarded to a person who already holds a postgraduate qualification.

Returning to the Back to Education Allowance (3rd Level only)

Until now a person could only apply for BTEA in respect of a 3rd level course, providing they were commencing their course at year 1, this is no longer the case provided the other scheme conditions are satisfied:

- A person can now avail of the BTEA where they previously did not complete their course (they may have 'dropped out') and are returning to the second or subsequent year of their 3rd level course
- This also applies to people who are granted an exemption from a period of their 3rd level course based on a previous course or on life experience.
- Where a person completed earlier year(s) of their 3rd level course on a part-time basis but are now getting a Jobseeker's payment, they may apply for BTEA to continue their course on a full-time basis.

For further information on these changes to the Back to Education Allowance, visit the Department of Social Protection website at www.welfare.ie

Other Qualifying Periods

Periods spent on VTOS, FÁS Training Courses, Youthreach, C.E., Back to Work

Allowance, FÁS Job Initiative or Revenue Job Assist may count towards the qualifying period to qualify for the BTEA. You may access the BTEA Scheme directly from one of these schemes under certain conditions.

Periods spent in receipt of Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA), Direct Provision or periods spent in prison may count towards the qualifying period for BTEA, but you must establish an entitlement to a Social Welfare payment **before** you commence your course of study.

If you finish one of the above mentioned schemes, and there is a break over 4 weeks between finishing the scheme and beginning an approved course of study you must establish an entitlement to a relevant qualifying Social Welfare payment in order to qualify for the BTEA.

Payment on the Back to Education Allowance

- BTEA is essentially a Social Welfare replacement income which is paid at a standard weekly rate equivalent to your basic rate of Social Welfare payment. If you are currently getting a reduced rate of payment on your existing social welfare payment you will be entitled to a maximum standard personal rate of the relevant Social Welfare payment that qualifies you for participation in the BTEA scheme.
- If you are getting the One-Parent Family Payment, Deserted Wife's Allowance, Deserted Wife's Benefit, Widows, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory or Non-Contributory Pension), Prisoners Wife Allowance, Illness Allowance, Blind Pension or Carer's Allowance (after your caring responsibilities have finished), you will be paid BTEA at a rate equal to the highest rate of your current social welfare payment. You will not receive two payments.
- If you are a Qualified Adult Dependant of a person who is eligible for BTEA you can qualify for BTEA in your own right. You will receive an allowance equal to the highest standard personal rate your spouse/partner would receive
- In addition to your weekly payment, you will receive an annual €300 cost of education allowance
- If you work part-time or casually, this will not affect your BTEA payment as long as you maintain your full-time student status. However, income from part-time or casual employment could affect your entitlement to Rent or Mortgage Interest Supplement
- You will keep any entitlement to any secondary benefits you have - Fuel Allowance, Diet Supplement, under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme (subject to the conditions above)

How to apply for a place

- Contact the colleges directly to get information about courses. The Area Based Partnerships (see Chapter 7), the local VEC and your LES will be willing to help you do this and can help with general information. In addition, they may help you with financial assistance towards the application fees

- Contact the student officer at the colleges Students Union Office for information and suggestions
- Most applications are made through the Central Applications Office (CAO). Some colleges may also ask you to make a separate application to them directly. Ask if this is necessary
- The college may ask you to attend an interview to assess your knowledge of the subjects you wish to study. During this interview they might ask about your motivation and commitment to staying in college for the duration of the course
- When you receive a letter offering you a place at college, fill out 'Form BTE1 available at your local Social Welfare Office or you may download from the website www.welfare.ie

How to apply for a student grant

-Existing Applicants

Students who are currently in receipt of a student grant and who are progressing to the next year of the same course will continue to be assessed and paid by the existing awarding authorities - i.e. the relevant local authority or Vocational Educational Committee.

-Changing Course/New Course

Students who are changing course or progressing to a new course, including an add-on course, will need to apply through the new online system SUSI, see new applicants below.

-New Applicants

A new online only student grant application system has been introduced for the 2012/2013 academic year. All new applications will be made online to a single awarding authority, SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland), a unit of City of Dublin VEC, through the www.studentfinance.ie website.

Following an initial assessment of your application, if eligible, you will receive by post notification of provisional grant approval and a personalised list of the supporting documents you will need to return to complete your application. Completed documentary evidence packs (photocopies of the documents, not originals) should be returned as soon as possible in the envelope provided to you.

When you return all the necessary supporting documents SUSI will process your application to award stage, subject to confirmation of your acceptance on an approved course. When you confirm acceptance of a place on an approved course (usually late August/early September), your grant will be awarded. You should notify the fees/registration office in your college of your grant eligibility.

If you qualify for a student grant the payment will be made on a monthly basis (subject to confirmation of attendance) directly into your designated Irish bank account. If you qualify for a fee grant (i.e. student contribution, tuition fee or

postgraduate fee contribution) the payment will be made directly to the approved institution.

- There are two rates of maintenance grant. The adjacent rate (if you live less than 45 kilometres from the college) and the non-adjacent rate (if you live more than 45 kilometres from the college). Detailed information on financial supports for students can be found on the website www.studentfinance.ie
- New applicants who are in receipt of the Back to Education Allowance and the VTOS allowance for those pursuing PLC courses will be ineligible for student grants. The cost of the student services charge and any fees payable to colleges will continue to be met for eligible students by the Exchequer on their behalf
- For grant eligibility the student must be resident in the State for 3 of the past 5 years
- For re-entry as an independently assessed mature student the duration of the break in studies must be at least 3 years
- Introduction of an administrative deadline for the submission of grant appeals

Grants and Funds available for Mature Students

- If you wish to enter or return to third-level education and you are over 23 years of age, Irish third-level colleges have places on their courses for mature students. You will have to consider the costs of fees and maintenance depending on whether you are going to do a full-time or a part-time course. If you are leaving work to study a full-time undergraduate course you may be eligible for third-level maintenance grant.
- If you do not qualify for a student grant and you are doing a full-time undergraduate course you may be eligible for free fees. (If you are applying for an undergraduate course you are not eligible for a student grant or free fees if you have already completed an undergraduate course).
- If you are applying for a postgraduate course you may have to pay fees – maintenance grants for postgraduate courses have been removed. You will also have to pay fees if you are intending to study part-time or do a distance learning course. If you do have to pay fees you may be able to get tax relief at the standard rate.



People who are getting Back to Education Allowance and those on Post-Leaving Certificate courses who are getting VTOS allowances will not be eligible for a student grant. However, this does not affect any entitlement they may have to exemption from college fees.

Help with Fees and Maintenance

The main schemes that apply to mature students (generally persons over 23 years of age) are:

- The Student Grant Scheme, which is available to students who plan to study full time on approved third-level courses (of at least two years' duration), including mature students
- If you are getting a Jobseeker's Payment, One-Parent Family Payment or Disability Payment the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) allows you to study at second and third level without losing your benefits. You must meet certain criteria to be eligible for the BTEA

Postgraduate students

New students entering postgraduate courses, from the 2012/13 academic year onwards will not be entitled to maintenance payments under the Student Grant Scheme.

New students entering postgraduate courses from September 2012 onwards will make their applications for grants to Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI - a division of the City of Dublin VEC) which will administer the Student Grant Scheme on behalf of the Department.

New postgraduate students who meet the qualifying conditions for the special rate of grant will be eligible to have their post-graduate tuition fees paid up to the maximum fee limit under the Student Grant Scheme.

In addition, a further limited number of students who would previously have qualified under the standard grant thresholds will qualify to have a €2,000 contribution made towards the costs of their fees. The new income threshold for this payment is €31,500 for the 2012/13 academic year, increasing relative to the number of family dependants. Maintenance payments beyond these levels of fee support will not be provided.

Postgraduate students continuing on their existing courses will not be affected by these changes.

Tax relief is also available on postgraduate tuition fees. Details in relation to this relief are available from the Revenue Commissioners.

Other Funds

There are a number of other funds available to support you in your return to third-level education. These include:

- Fund for students with disabilities. The fund provides funding to higher education institutions for the provision of services and supports for full-time students with disabilities, including those pursuing post graduate study at universities in Northern Ireland.
- The Student Assistance Fund is for students who having commenced a third-level course, experience financial hardship and, therefore, may be unable to continue their third-level studies. Applications for funding should be made by the individual student to the access/disability officer in their institution. The Fund is administered on a confidential, discretionary basis.

Where to Apply

- Contact the Mature Students Officer or the Admissions Officer at the college
- For the Special fund for People with Disabilities apply to the Student Counsellor or Disabilities Support Officer at the college of your choice

FIT (Fastrack to Information Technology)

FIT is a unique initiative which was set up for unemployed people to access training and pursue employment opportunities requiring skills in Information Technology (IT). FIT is supported by industry and involves major companies (AIB, Alchemy, AOL, Eircom, HP, IBM, Microsoft, O2, Oracle, Siemens, Skillssoft and Symantec) who are actively committed to the integration of marginalised job seekers into the workforce through gaining IT skills. To this end all FIT Programmes, which have been developed by industry (currently 24 ICT curricula, covering technical skills and personal/professional development), are run throughout Ireland.

FIT provides ongoing support to the graduates of its programmes and views its primary objective as not just the securement of a job but also the commencement of a career. To join a FIT course applicants do not need any formal education or professional experience, just an interest in IT and a willingness to learn. To find out more information on the wide range of courses on offer, to check the eligibility criteria and to enrol on a FIT course contact: FIT Ltd. At (01) 882 5570. Website: www.fit.ie

Skillnets

Skillnets enables groups of companies within the private sector to set up training networks. Training delivery is industry driven. The majority of training courses will be open to people on a Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit payment or self-employed people who have ceased trading. For further information contact Skillnets on: (01) 207 9630. Website: www.skillnets.ie

Education, Training and Development Courses

You may be able to take up education, training or development courses not normally covered by the BTEA by going through the Employment Services Officer at your local Social Welfare Office.

- Eligibility criteria are similar to those for the Back to Education Allowance (See leaflet SW70), however periods spent on VTOS, FÁS Training Courses, Youthreach, C.E., Back to Work Allowance, FÁS Job Initiative or Revenue Job Assist **do not** count towards the qualifying period
- 21 years of age or
- 18 – 20 years of age and out of formal education for 2 years and getting a qualifying payment for 3 months
- In receipt of Jobseekers Allowance for at least 6 months (156 days)
- An Employment Services Officer must approve the course

- You must satisfy the Employment Support Services Officer that the course will specifically improve your chance of getting a job

A broad range of courses may be approved e.g. personal development courses. basic education and literacy classes.

Part-Time Education Options

If you are a Jobseeker, you can take on part-time study and you may be able to retain your Jobseekers payment. Although this option is not part of any return-to-education programme or course, it is your 'right' as an unemployed person to pursue training, re-training or education, which may improve your ability to seek and find work, while you continue to look for work.

To be eligible:

- You will still need to be Genuinely Seeking Work (see Chapter 1)
- If you are offered a place on a course, you will need a letter from the College or School stating that the course is part-time. Make sure you bring this with you when you go to your local Social Welfare Office

There are many part-time courses, usually called 'Adult Education Courses', available in schools and colleges. There is usually a small fee for these courses, but very often a reduced rate fee applies to people on low incomes. Ask about possible fee reductions. These courses are listed in The Guide to Evening Classes, available in your local library/bookshop.

Springboard Initiative 2012

If you are unemployed, you may want to continue your education or take part in a training course to develop your skills and improve your chances of getting back to work.

Springboard, which was first launched in May 2011, is a specific initiative to provide free part time higher education places for unemployed people in areas of identified skills needs. The programme is aimed at people who have previously been employed in construction, manufacturing or other sectors of the economy where employment levels are unlikely to recover to pre-recession levels.

In 2012 Springboard is providing 6,000 new places on 220 different courses that aim to address the skills needs of key growth sectors of the economy such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT), International Financial Services and the Green Economy. There are also a range of courses available that address cross sectoral generic skills such as export sales and entrepreneurship. The courses, which are at level 6 (higher certificate) to level 9 (masters degree) on the National Framework of Qualifications, are being delivered in 36 public and private higher education providers around the country.

Further information on the courses can be found at www.springboardcourses.ie. Prospective students can also seek information and advice from qualified guidance counsellors at the Springboard freephone line: 1800 303 523.

In order to qualify for Springboard, you must:

- Be getting Jobseeker's Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance, One-Parent Family Payment, Disability Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Farm Assist/Fish Assist, Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory or non-Contributory) Pension or
- Be signing for social insurance credits before the course start date, and
- Be actively seeking and available to take up employment

You are also eligible for Springboard (with approval from a Department of Social Protection Facilitator) if you are on one of the following schemes or payments:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ● Community Employment | ● JobBridge |
| ● Rural Social Scheme | ● Back to Work Enterprise Allowance |
| ● Tús | ● Short-Term Enterprise Allowance |

– Self Employed

If you were formerly self-employed, even if you have not been signing for unemployment credits or receiving a Jobseeker's payment, you are eligible to participate on a Springboard course.

– Qualified Adults

Qualified Adults of persons in receipt of qualifying payments can participate in the Springboard programme.

– Costs

No course fees or charges are payable by participants on a Springboard course for the duration of time that they are unemployed. Participants may be required to pay for books or other course materials.

– Social Welfare Payments

While participation on a Springboard course will not confer any entitlement to receive an income support payment from the Department of Social Protection, participants who are in receipt of a Department of Social Protection income support payment may be able to retain such payments subject to continuing to meet the eligibility conditions.

– How to apply

Applications for the Springboard programme can only be made online through the dedicated information and applications website: www.springboardcourses.ie. Applications cannot be made directly to colleges participating in the Springboard scheme. Please contact individual colleges for further information on courses available.

If you are getting a social welfare payment, you should notify your local social welfare office and check what further steps (if any) you need to take. For example, if you are getting Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance you must register for the **Part-Time Education Option (PTEO)** using the PTEO – Springboard 2012 form.

ICT Skills Conversion Programme

As part of the joint Government-Industry ICT Action Plan to boost the domestic supply of ICT graduates for Irish employment opportunities, more than 750 places have been made available on Higher Diploma Level 8 ICT Conversion Programmes. The programmes are targeted at jobseekers who have the capacity and underlying aptitude, as well as an honours degree in a cognate discipline, to undergo an intensive programme of study and work experience to acquire honours degree level ICT programming skills. Further information is available at www.ictskills.ie.

– Costs

The programmes are free of charge to participants.

– Social Welfare Payments

Participation on a programme does not create any entitlement to receive an income support payment from the Department of Social Protection, or to extend the period of time for which any existing income supports are payable. However, unemployed people who are in receipt of a Jobseekers payment (JA/JB) for at least 3 months in the 6 months prior to the commencement of the programmes will be able to retain such payments for the duration of time that an entitlement exists to such a payment.

Back to College Initiative for Jobseekers

The scheme is now closed to new entrants, but students already on the courses will be able to complete them.

Aontas

Aontas is the National Association of Adult Education. It exists to promote the development of a learning society through the provision of a quality and comprehensive system of adult learning and education that is accessible to all people. It is a voluntary membership organisation. Aontas offers a free information service to the public providing information on courses, funding, application procedures and other areas specific to the needs of adults. It produces several publications aimed at helping mature students back into education. Contact: Aontas, 2nd Floor, 83-87 Main Street, Ranelagh, Dublin 6. Tel: (01) 406 8220/1. Website: www.aontas.com

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Introduction

This Chapter aims to help you identify many of the information sources available to you. When phoning or asking for information from any Government Department or Community organisation the following could be useful:

- Have your (and your spouses') PPS number, date of birth and details of dates on which you applied for any payments written down so that you can refer to them.
- Always ask for the name of the person you are talking to.
- Have any letters or paperwork related to your enquiry at hand – they may contain information, names or a reference number you may need when making your enquiry.
- Before you phone write down a list of questions about what you need to ask or find out about so that you are as clear as possible.
- A number of Government Departments/Offices operate a Lo-Call service. Numbers starting with the digits 1890 are Lo-Call numbers. Calls to numbers with digits 0761 are also Lo-Call.

Appeals, Legal Advice & Complaints

Social Welfare Appeals Office

D'Olier House, D'Olier Street, Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 671 8633 Lo-Call: 1890 747 434
e-mail: swappeals@welfare.ie

Office of the Ombudsman

18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 639 5600 Lo-Call: 1890 223 030
e-mail: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

Northside Community Law Centre

Northside Civic Centre,
Bunratty Road, Coolock, Dublin 17.
Tel: (01) 847 7804 / 847 8692
e-mail: info@nclc.ie

Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC)

13 Lower Dorset Street, Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 874 5690 Lo-Call: 1890 350 250
e-mail: info@flac.ie

Legal Aid Board

Quay Street, Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry
Lo-Call 1890 615 200
e-mail: info@legallaidboard.ie

Employment Appeals Tribunal

Davitt House,
65a Adelaide Road,
Dublin 2.
Tel: (01) 631 3006 Lo-Call: 1890 220 222
e-mail: eat@djei.ie

The Labour Relations Commission

Tom Johnson House,
Haddington Road,
Dublin 4.
Tel: (01) 613 6700
Lo-Call 1890 220 227
e-mail: info@lrc.ie

Disability

Forum of People with Disabilities

21 Hill Street,
Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 878 6077
e-mail: info@fpd.ie

Disability Federation of Ireland

Fumbally Court, Fumbally Lane,
Dublin 8.
Tel: (01) 454 7978
e-mail: info@disability-federation.ie

Employment Rights

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

23/28 Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 631 2121

e-mail: info@djei.ie

Lo-Call 1890 220 222

National Employment Rights Authority

O'Brien Road,

Co. Carlow.

Tel: 1890 80 80 90

website: www.employmentrights.ie

Employment Support Services & Agencies

Employment Support Services,

Department of Social Protection

P.O. Box 3840, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 704 3165

e-mail: alice.sherlock@welfare.ie

FÁS

Head Office,

27-33 Upr. Baggot Street, Dublin 4.

Tel: (01) 607 0500

e-mail: info@fas.ie

Local Employment Services (LES) AREAS

Area	Phone	Area	Phone
Ballyfermot	(01) 623 5612	KWCD	(01) 409 5082
Ballymun	(01) 866 7000	Limerick (P.A.U.L.)	(061) 419 388 (061) 412 999
Blanchardstown	(01) 820 6379 / 820 9550	Mayo	(094) 902 6468
Bray	(01) 286 8266	Monaghan	(047) 72191
Canal Communities	(01) 453 7229	Northside (Dublin)	(01) 848 5630
Clare	(065) 684 0333	South Kerry	(066) 947 3068
Clondalkin	(01) 457 7308	Southside (Dun Laoghaire)	(01) 284 1977
Cork City	(021) 430 2310	Freephone Number	1800 200 501
Drogheda	(041) 984 4755	Tallaght	(01) 462 3590
Dublin Inner City	(01) 872 1321	Tralee	(066) 712 9675
Dundalk	(042) 932 8897	Waterford	(058) 45750
Finglas/Cabra	(01) 836 1666	Waterford City	(051) 304 951
Galway City	(091) 773 466	Wexford Town	(053) 915 5800
Kildare	(045) 895 555	Wexford County	(053) 923 7020

HSE (Health Service Executive)

For information about health services, entitlements, how to access social services contact the HSE infoline:



1850 24 1850

Health

Dublin Aids Alliance

53 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1.

Tel: (01) 873 3799

e-mail: info@dublnaidsalliance.ie

Alcoholics Anonymous

Unit 2 Block C, Santry Business Park,

Swords Road, Dublin 9

Tel: (01) 842 0700

e-mail: gso@alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Department of Health & Children

Hawkins House, Hawkins Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 635 4000

e-mail: info@health.gov.ie

Health Promotion Unit

Department of Health & Children

Hawkins House, Poolbeg Street,

Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 671 4711

e-mail: healthinfo@hse.ie

Parentline – Parents under Stress

Carmichael House,

North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.

Tel: (01) 878 7230 Lo-Call: 1890 927 277

e-mail: info@parentline.ie

Housing

Threshold

21 Stoneybatter, Dublin 7.

Tel: (01) 678 6096 e-mail: advice@threshold.ie

Focus Ireland

14a Eustace Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 671 2555 e-mail: info@focusireland.ie

Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government

Custom House, Custom House Quay, Dublin 1.

Tel: (01) 888 2000 (Lo-Call) 1890 202 021

e-mail: aie@environ.ie

Dublin Simon Community

St Andrew's House, 28/30 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 671 1606

e-mail: info@simoncommunity.ie



INOUE Affiliate Organisations

The INOUE was founded in 1987 and now comprises over 200 local centres, community based organisations, branches of unemployed people and other groups throughout the country. The section below lists, by county the INOUE Affiliated organisations that provide welfare rights/welfare to work services. These affiliates are also listed on the INOUE website: www.inou.ie/affiliates/

For more information about becoming affiliated to the INOUE please contact us: tel: (01) 856 0088 or email: info@inou.ie website: www.inou.ie

Providing welfare rights information/welfare to work services

CAVAN

Cavan Information and Opportunities Centre

16 Bridge Street, Cavan, Co. Cavan.

Tel: (049) 437 2021

e-mail: cs2ue@yahoo.ie

CLARE

Obair

Ennis Rd, Newmarket on Fergus, Co. Clare.

Tel: (061) 368 030 Fax: (061) 368 717

e-mail: info@obair.org

Congress Information and Opportunities Centre

Elevation Business Park, Clon Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Clare. Tel: (065) 684 1009 e-mail: info@cioc.ie

Co. Clare Citizens Information Service

Bindon Lane, Bank Place, Ennis, Co. Clare

Tel: 0761 075 260 e-mail: ennis@citinfo.ie

North West Clare Family Resource Centre

Monastery House, Ennistymon, Co. Clare

Tel: (065) 707 1144 e-mail: info@northwestclarefrc.ie

CORK

Ballyphephane Community Resource Centre

Lower Friars Walk, Ballyphephane, Co. Cork

Tel: (021) 432 1571 e-mail: btcdp@eircom.net

Bantry Resource Centre

Glengariff Road, Bantry, Co. Cork

Tel: (027) 51315 Fax: (027) 50034

e-mail: bantrycommunity@eircom.net

Bantry Citizens Information Centre

Wolf Tone Square, Bantry, Co. Cork

Tel: 0761 078 390 e-mail: bantry@citinfo.ie

Cork Trade Union Ctr for the Unemployed

13 North Main Street, Cork, Co. Cork

Tel: 021-427 5876 e-mail: cctu@eircom.net

Cobh Family Resource Centre

Park House, Cloyne Terrace, Cobh, Co. Cork

Tel: (021) 481 6103

e-mail: cobhresourcecentre@eircom.net

Citizens Information Phone Service

Block B, Heritage Business Park, Bessboro Road, Blackrock, Co. Cork

Lo-Call 1890 777121 (021) 452 1600

e-mail: information@citinfo.ie

Cork CIC

80 South Mall, Cork, Co. Cork

Tel: 0761 076950 e-mail: cork@citinfo.ie

Cork City Partnership

Heron House, Blackpool Park, Cork, Co. Cork

Tel: (021) 430 2310 fax: (021) 430 2081

e-mail: info@partnershipcork.ie

Togher Pre-school and Family Centre

6 Maglin Gr., Deanrock Estate, Togher, Co. Cork

Tel: (021) 431 6766

e-mail: togherfamilycentre@eircom.net

Finding Information

West Cork Community Partnership
Unit 13, IDA Centre, Ropewalk, Bantry, Co. Cork.
Tel: (027) 52266 e-mail: info@wccp.ie
Welfare Rights information by appointment

DONEGAL

Action Inishowen
Millbray, Camdonagh, Co. Donegal
Tel: (07493) 74529 Fax: (07493) 74711
e-mail: info@actioninishowen.com

Letterkenny Resource Centre
Unit 4 Pearse Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Tel: 074 912 8010 (07491) 29491
e-mail: congressresourcecl@hotmail.com

DUBLIN

Ballyfermot Local Employment Services
4 Drumfinn Park, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10
Tel: (01) 623 5612 e-mail: mshelley@bles.ie

Ballyfermot Youth Services
3 Drumfinn Park, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10
Tel: (01) 623 5612
e-mail: info@ballyfermotys.ie

Ballymun Jobs Centre
Unit 36, Ballymun Town Centre, Dublin 11
Tel: (01) 866 7000 Fax: (01) 842 0134
e-mail: info@bmjob.ie

Ballymun Unemployed & Welfare Rights Centre
Axis, Main Street, Ballymun, Dublin 11
Tel: (01) 883 2138 Fax: (01) 883 2139
e-mail: aine.rooney@axis-ballymun.ie

Blanchardstown Centre for the Unemployed
1-2a Corduff Shopping Centre, Blanchardstown,
Dublin 15. Tel: (01) 821 0552
e-mail: bciinfo@ireland.com

Bohernabreena Community Enterprise
14 Allenton Drive, Ballycragh, Tallaght, D24
Tel: (01) 452 6201 e-mail: boher14@gmail.com

Choices
2-3 Quinns Road, Shankill, Co. Dublin
Tel: (01) 282 0110 e-mail: info@choicesalc.ie

Canal Local Employment Service (LES)
Goldenbridge Integrated Complex, St Vincent's St.
West, Inchicore, Dublin 8. Tel: (01) 4537229 e-mail: goldenbridge@canallesn.ie

Clondalkin Employment and Education Development Service (CEEDS)
Áras Rualach, Neilstown Rd, Clondalkin, D 22
Tel: (01) 623 3629 e-mail: grwills@eircom.net

Connolly Centre
80/82 The Coombe, Dublin 8.
Tel: (01) 453 0803 e-mail: cicu@eircom.net

Crosscare Emigrant Project
1a Cathedral Street, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 873 2844 Fax: (01) 872 7003
e-mail: migrantproject@crosscare.ie

Crumlin Citizen's Information Centre
146 Sundrive Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12.
Tel: 0761 077 020 e-mail: crumlin@citinfo.ie

Dublin 8 – Bluebell CIS
90 Meath Street, Dublin 8
Tel: (01) 473 5178 Fax: (01) 473 1749
e-mail: dublin8bluebell@citinfo.ie

Dublin 12 Congress Centre
155a Drimmagh Road, Drimmagh, Dublin 12
Tel: (01) 405 9377 Fax: (01) 405 9198
e-mail: d12@gofree.indigo.ie

Dublin 15 Citizens Information Centre
Westend House, Westend Office Park
Snugborough Rd. Extension, Dublin 15
Tel: 0761 075 040 Fax: (01) 812 8702
e-mail: blanchardstown@citinfo.ie

Finglas Cabra MABS
5 Church Street, Finglas Village, Dublin 11
Tel: 0761 072 170 e-mail: finglas@mabs.ie

FIT Ltd (Fastrack to IT)
7a Bellevue Industrial Estate, Glasnevin, D11
Tel: (01) 882 5570 e-mail: info@fit.ie

The Fingal Centre for the Unemployed
5 Cardiffsbridge Road, Finglas West, Dublin 11
Tel: (01) 884 5228
e-mail: info@thefingalcentre.ie

Fountain Resource Group
c/o Presbytery, James Street, Dublin 8
Tel: (01) 473 1388 e-mail: frg@iol.ie

Inner City Employment Service
St Andrew's Resource Centre, 114 Pearse St. D2
Tel: (01) 677 1930
e-mail: jim.hargis.ices@gmail.com

Inner City Organisations Network (ICON)
22 Lower Buckingham Street, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 836 6890 e-mail: iconet@iol.ie

Irish Trade Union Trust
Liberty Hall, Eden Quay, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 878 7272 e-mail: itut@suptu.ie

Larkin Unemployed Centre
57/58 North Strand Road, Dublin 3
Tel: (01) 836 5544 Fax: (01) 836 6819
e-mail: rightsandinfo@larkincir.com

Mountwood Fitzgerald Park Resource Centre
71-73 Maple House, Mountwood,
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin Tel: (01) 284 5722
e-mail: reception@mountwood.ie

Northside Centre for the Unemployed

Glin Road, Bonnybrook, Dublin 17
Tel: (01) 847 9463 e-mail: ncto@eircom.net

Northside Community Law Centre

Northside Civic Centre
Bunratty Road, Coolock, Dublin 17
Tel: (01) 847 7804 e-mail: info@nclc.ie

South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCD)

90 Meath Street, Dublin 8
Tel: (01) 453 6098 e-mail: info@sicdda.ie

Southside LES

137 Oliver Plunkett Road, Monkstown Farm, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin Tel: (01) 284 1977
e-mail: info@southsideles.com

SWIC Local Employment Centre

Unit D, Digital Court, off Rainsford St. Dublin 8
Tel: (01) 511 1260 Fax: (01) 511 1269
e-mail: catherinebyrne@swiclec.ie

Tallaght Centre for the Unemployed

St. Dominic's Hall, Main Street, Tallaght, D 24
Tel: (01) 451 2983 Fax: (01) 452 6094
e-mail: madeleinemoralee@eircom.net
e-mail: magdeaton@eircom.net

West Tallaght Resource Centre

16 Glenshane Lawns, Tallaght, Dublin 24
Tel: (01) 452 2533 e-mail: wtrc@eircom.net

GALWAY

Ballinasloe Community Information Centre

Emerald Hall, McNevin Road, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway Tel: (0906) 44390
e-mail: bsloecic@eircom.net bsloe@cic.ie

Galway Peoples Resource Centre

St Clare's Walk, Merchant's Road, Galway
Tel: 091 564 822 e-mail: info@gprc.ie

Galway Rural Development Co. Ltd.

Mellows Campus, Athenry, Co. Galway
Tel: (0915) 64 822 e-mail: dcolohan@grd.ie

West Training & Development Ltd

Mayoralty House, Merchants Road, Galway, Co. Galway. Tel: (091) 567 827
e-mail: breda.lymer@westtraining.ie

KERRY

Kerry Supported Employment Ltd

Upper Rock Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Tel: (066) 711 8758 Fax: (066) 711 8646
e-mail: kerrysupportedemployment@eircom.net

Tralee LES

1-2 North Circular, Tralee, Co. Kerry
Tel: 066-712 9675 e-mail: info@traleeles.ie

KILKENNY

Kilkenny CIC

4 The Parade, Kilkenny. Tel: 0761 077 910
Fax: (056) 772 0298 e-mail: kilkenny@citinfo.ie

LAOIS

SUIL (Supporting Unemployed in Laois)

12 Colliers Court, Portlaoise, Co Laois
Tel: (0502) 62732 Fax: (0502) 62736
e-mail: rotimiadebari@eircom.net

LEITRIM

Co. Leitrim Job Club, Leitrim Partnership,

Church Street, Drumshambo, Co. Leitrim
Tel: (07196) 41740 Fax: (07196) 41741
e-mail: leitrimjobclub@eircom.net

Northside LES

Unit 4, Watch House Cross S.C. Kileely, Limerick
Tel: (061) 327 788 e-mail: adlancy@les.ie

LIMERICK

Limerick Resource Centre for the Unemployed

Unit 6/7 Hunt's Lane, Dominick St, Limerick.
Tel: (061) 416 056 e-mail: lrcu@eircom.net

Millennium Jobs Club

Suite 3 Unit 9, Watch House Cross S.C., Kileely Rd., Limerick. Tel: (061) 329133
e-mail: fasclub@eircom.net

Moyross Community Enterprise Centre

Moyross, Limerick, Co. Limerick.
Tel: (061) 326 057 Fax: (061) 325 300
e-mail: moyross@communitylink.ie

PAUL (People Action Unemployment Ltd)

Unit 25, The Tait Business Centre,
Dominic Street, Limerick. Tel: (061) 419 388
e-mail: info@paulpartnership.ie

Our Lady of Lourdes Action Centre

Greenfields Cross, Rosbrien, Limerick, Co. Limerick.
Tel: (061) 228 596
e-mail: kitty.liddy@communitylink.ie

Southill Community Action Centre

Southill House, Roxboro Road, Limerick
Tel: (061) 415340 e-mail: actioncentre@southill.ie

LONGFORD

Co. Longford Citizens Information Service

Level One, Longford S.C., Longford
Tel: 0761 075 890 e-mail: longford@citinfo.ie

Employment Development Information Centre

Unit 11A2, Mastertech Business Park,
Longford, Co. Longford. Tel: (043) 3347515
e-mail: infocentre@eircom.net

Springlawn Residents & Community Development Group

Community Resource Centre, 26 Springlawn, Co.
Longford. Tel: 087 374 9950
e-mail: springlawnrcdg@hotmail.com

LOUTH

Ait na nDaoine Teo

2 Grange Close, Muirhevnamore, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Tel: (042) 932 6645 Fax: (042) 932 6645
e-mail: anthonyejordan@gmail.com

County Louth Supported Employment Partnership Ltd

9b-9c Partnership Court, Dundalk, Co. Louth.
Tel: (042) 938 6718
e-mail: supportedemploymentdlk@eircom.net

Drogheda Resource Centre

7 North Quay, Drogheda, Co. Louth
Tel: (041) 983 5754 e-mail: drucinfo@eircom.net

Dundalk People's Centre

30 Clanbrassil Street, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Tel: (042) 933 8820
e-mail: dundalkrcu@eircom.net

MAYO

TACU Family Resource Centre

Credit Union House, Main St, Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo
Tel: (094) 954 2908
e-mail: ballinrobefrc@eircom.net

MEATH

Meath Job Club

29 Flower Hill, Navan, Co. Meath
Tel: (046) 9078968
e-mail: meathjobclub1@eircom.net

MONAGHAN

Clones Family Resource Centre

4 MacCurtain Street, Clones, Co. Monaghan.
Tel: (047) 52919 e-mail: clonesfrc@gmail.com

Farney Resource & Information Centre

The Work House, Shercock Road,
Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
Tel: (042) 9663454 e-mail: farneyinfo@eircom.net

OFFALY

Co. Offaly CIS

Tullamore CIC, The Bridge Ctr., Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Tel: 0761 076 290 e-mail: tullamore@citinfo.ie

SLIGO

Sligo Citizens Information Centre

Bridgewater House, Rockwood Parade, Co. Sligo
Tel: 0761 076 390
e-mail: sligo@citinfo.ie

TIPPERARY

Knockanrawley Resource Centre

Knockanrawley, Tipperary Town, Co. Tipperary
Tel: (062) 52688
e-mail: knockanrawley@eircom.net

Nenagh Community Network

84 Connolly St, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
Tel: (067) 34900 e-mail: ncn@eircom.net

North Tipperary LEADER Partnership

New Line, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.
Tel: (050) 523379 e-mail: cconlon@ntlp.ie

WATERFORD

Ballybeg Key Project

Parish Centre, Ballybeg, Waterford, Co. Waterford
Tel: (051) 358 829
e-mail: keyproject@ballybegcdp.ie

Co. Waterford LES

Lismore Business Park, Lismore, Co. Waterford
Tel: (058) 54646 e-mail: julie.odonnell@wlp.ie

Waterford Citizens Information Centre

37 Lower Yellow Road, Waterford, Co. Waterford
Tel: 0761 076 580 e-mail: waterford@citinfo.ie

WESTMEATH

Dr. Stevens Centre

Lloyds Lane, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
Tel: (09064) 73001 e-mail: joaniefas@eircom.net

Mullingar Congress Centre

Harbour Court, Friarsmill Road, Mullingar, Co.
Westmeath Tel: (044) 934 5060
e-mail: congresscentre@eircom.net

WEXFORD

County Wexford VEC

Adult Education Guidance Service,
100 North Main St., Wexford, Co. Wexford.
Tel: (053) 9152067
e-mail: adultguidance@cowexfordvec.ie

Gorey Unemployment Centre

The Avenue, Gorey, Co. Wexford
Tel: (053) 942 0037 e-mail: gucl@eircom.net

Kilmuckridge Family Resource Centre

Kilmuckridge, Gorey, Co. Wexford
Tel: (053) 913 0393
e-mail: kilmuckridgecentre@eircom.net

Raheen FRC

Clonroche, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
Tel: (051) 428 805
e-mail: raheenfrinfo@gmail.com

Wexford Local Development

Mill Park Rd., Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.
Tel: (053) 915 5864
e-mail: tyrrell@wld.ie / info@wld.ie

WICKLOW

AEGIS

C/o Wicklow VEC, The Murrough Campus, Co.
Wicklow. Tel: 0404 32651
e-mail: nuala@wags.ie

Carnew Training & Development Centre
Woolgreen, Carnew, Co. Wicklow.
Tel: (053) 942 6555
e-mail: info@carnewtdc.ie

Little Bray Resource Centre
Ard Chuallan, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Tel: (01) 286 7644
e-mail: lbrcadmin2@eircom.net

Wicklow Child and Family Project
The Mall, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow
Tel: (0404) 64725 e-mail: wcandfp@indigo.ie

Wicklow Trade Union Centre for the Unemployed
97 (Rear) Main Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Tel: (01) 286 6730 e-mail: bray@congresscentres.net
St. Fergal's Resource Centre
107 Old Court Avenue, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Tel: (01) 276 0376 e-mail: sfresctr@indigo.ie

NORTHERN IRELAND

Organisation of the Unemployed Northern Ireland (OUNI)
c/o 45/47 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2FG

Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre
45/47 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2FG
Tel: (048) 909 61111 e-mail: barrie.mclatchie@burc.org

Money Management and Tax

Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Headquarters,
91/92 Sean McDermott Street, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 838 6990 e-mail: info@svp.ie

Central Revenue Information Office
Cathedral Street, Off O'Connell Street, Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 865 5000 Lo-Call: 1890 33 34 25
e-mail: catdr@revenue.ie

One Parent Family Support Organisations

Barnardo's
Christchurch Square, Dublin 8
Tel: (01) 453 0355 e-mail: info@barnardos.ie
Call-Save: 1850 222 300

Treoir – National Information Centre for Unmarried Parents
14 Gandon House, Lower Mayor Street,
Custom House Square, IFSC, Dublin 1.
Tel: (01) 670 0120 Lo-Call: 1890 252 084
e-mail: info@treoir.ie

One Family
Cherish House
2 Lower Pembroke Street, Dublin 2
Tel: (01) 662 9212
e-mail: info@onefamily.ie
Lo-Call: 1890 66 22 12

One Parent Exchange Network (OPEN)
7 Red Cow Lane, Smithfield, Dublin 7
Tel: (01) 814 8860
e-mail: enquiries@oneparent.ie

Citizens Information

Citizens Information Board
Ground Floor, George's Quay House,
43 Townsend Street, Dublin 2
Tel: 0761 079 000 e-mail: info@ciboard.ie

Migrants Rights

Migrants Rights Centre Ireland
55 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 889 7570
e-mail: info@mrci.ie

Training and Education

Aontas
2nd Floor 83-87 Main St., Ranelagh, Dublin 6
Tel: (01) 406 8220 / 406 8221
e-mail: mail@aontas.com

Department of Education and Skills
Marlborough Street, Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 889 6400 info@education.gov.ie

Fasttrack to Information Technology
7a Bellevue Ind. Estate, Glasnevin, Dublin 11
Tel: (01) 882 5570 e-mail: info@fit.ie

National Adult Literacy Agency
Sandford Lodge, Sandford Close, Ranelagh,
Dublin 6
Tel: (01) 412 7900 e-mail: info@nala.ie

Women's Groups

National Women's Council of Ireland
4th Floor, 2/3 Parnell Square East
Dublin 1. Tel: (01) 878 7248
e-mail: info@nwci.ie

Women's Aid
Everton House, 47 Old Cabra Road,
Dublin 7. Helpline: 1800 341 900
e-mail: info@womensaid.ie

Money Advice and Budgeting Service (website: www.mabs.ie)

County	Location of Service	Telephone
Carlow	Carlow Town	0761 072 070
Cavan	Cavan Town	0761 072 410
Clare	Ennis	0761 072 430
	Shannon	0761 072 790
Cork	Cork City	0761 072 090
	Mallow	0761 072 440
	Dunmanway	0761 072 450
	Charleville	0761 072 420
Donegal	Buncrana	0761 072 470
	Letterkenny	0761 072 460
	South Donegal	0761 072 480
	West Donegal	0761 072 650
Galway	Tuam	0761 072 560
	Galway South	0761 072 570
Kerry	Tralee	0761 072 190
Kildare	Kilcock	0761 072 590
	Newbridge	0761 072 600
Kilkenny	Kilkenny	0761 072 610
Leitrim	Ballinamore	0761 072 630
Laois	Portlaoise	0761 072 620
Limerick	Limerick City	0761 072 210
Longford	Longford Town	0761 072 640
Louth	Dundalk	0761 072 540
	Drogheda	0761 072 490
Mayo	Ballina	0761 072 660
Meath	Navan	0761 072 680
Monaghan	Castleblaney	0761 072 690
Offaly	Tullamore	0761 072 710
Roscommon	Abbey Street	0761 072 720
Sligo	Sligo Town	0761 072 730
Tipperary	Thurles	0761 072 740
	Clonmel	0761 072 750
	Nenagh	0761 072 760
Waterford	Waterford City	0761 072 050
	Dungarvan	0761 072 770
Westmeath	Mullingar	0761 072 700
	Athlone	0761 072 400
Wexford	Wexford Town	0761 072 780
Wicklow	Bray	0761 072 250
	Arklow	0761 072 390

Dublin MABS

Ballymun	0761 720 150
Blanchardstown	0761 720 330
Cherry Orchard	0761 072 110
Clondalkin	0761 072 270
Coolock	0761 072 510
Crumlin	0761 072 500
Dublin South East	0761 072 520
Dorset Street	0761 072 510
Dundrum	0761 072 310

Fingal	0761 072 550
Finglas/Cabra	0761 072 170
Tallaght	0761 072 370
Liffey South West	0761 072 350
Dun Laoghaire	0761 072 530
North City	0761 072 520
North East	0761 072 290
Ballyfermot	0761 072 800

RATES OF PAYMENT

Jobseeker's Benefit maximum weekly rates

New and Existing Claimants	Personal Rate	Increase for a Qualified Adult	Increase for a Qualified Child
Maximum Rate	€188.00	€124.80	€29.80

Wage Bands: Weekly payment for new claims in 2012

Average Weekly Earnings (Maximum Rate)	Personal Rate	Increase for a Qualified Adult	Increase for a Qualified Child
Less than €150.00	€84.50	€80.90	€29.80
€150.00 - €219.99	€121.40	€80.90	€29.80
€220.00 - €299.99	€147.30	€80.90	€29.80
€300 or more	€188.00	€124.80	€29.80

Jobseeker's Allowance maximum weekly rates aged 25 and over

New and Existing Claimants	Personal Rate	Increase for a Qualified Adult	Increase for a Qualified Child
Maximum Rate	€188.00	€124.80	€29.80

Jobseeker's Allowance maximum weekly rates under 25 years of age

New and Existing Claimants (Maximum Rate)	Personal Rate	Increase for a Qualified Adult	Increase for a Qualified Child
18-19	€100.00	€100.00	—
20-21	€100.00	€100.00	—
22-24	€144.00	€124.80	—

	Claimant	Qualified Adult	Qualified Child
One Parent Family Payment	€188.00	—	€29.80
Carer's Benefit (Caring for 1)	€205.00	—	€29.80
Carer's Allowance (Caring for 1)	€204.00	—	€29.80
Illness Benefit	€188.00	€124.80	€29.80
Disability Allowance	€188.00	€124.80	€29.80

FAMILY INCOME SUPPLEMENT

1 Child	€506.00	5 Children	€950.00
2 Children	€602.00	6 Children	€1,066.00
3 Children	€703.00	7 Children	€1,202.00
4 Children	€824.00	8 Children	€1,298.00

Rent Supplement

Applicants must pay the first €30/€35 of the rent*

Maximum MONTHLY Rent Levels from 1st Jan 2012	Single Person in shared accommodation	Couple in shared accommodation	Single Person	Couple with no children	Couple with 1 child or one parent family with 1 child	Couple with 2 children or one parent family with 2 children	Couple with 3 children or one parent family with 3 children
Carlow	€230	€250	€350	€450	€550	€575	€590
Cavan	€160	€190	€325	€350	€400	€430	€450
Clare	€190	€210	€350	€380	€450	€475	€500
Cork	€260	€280	€450	€575	€700	€715	€750
Donegal	€195	€200	€315	€350	€390	€450	€500
Dublin (Fingal)	€250	€330	€475	€650	€775	€825	€900
Dublin	€300	€370	€475	€700	€875	€925	€950
Galway	€230	€250	€450	€540	€680	€700	€725
Kerry	€190	€220	€365	€390	€520	€550	€600
Kildare	€270	€290	€400	€500	€690	€725	€790
Kilkenny	€200	€230	€390	€430	€540	€575	€590
Leitrim	€175	€195	€300	€325	€350	€375	€400
Limerick	€220	€240	€390	€430	€500	€575	€650
Laois	€200	€230	€390	€400	€480	€505	€540
Longford	€160	€175	€300	€325	€340	€390	€500
Louth	€230	€280	€390	€430	€575	€600	€650
Mayo	€195	€215	€390	€400	€450	€475	€500
Meath	€200	€260	€390	€450	€550	€610	€675
Monaghan	€180	€190	€300	€350	€480	€500	€525
Offaly	€200	€220	€345	€400	€500	€540	€575
Roscommon	€175	€195	€300	€325	€400	€430	€480
Sligo	€195	€220	€340	€425	€520	€540	€550
Tipperary Nth	€195	€200	€345	€375	€410	€500	€525
Tipperary Sth	€195	€220	€370	€425	€525	€540	€550
Waterford	€230	€250	€390	€400	€500	€540	€590
Westmeath	€220	€260	€407	€450	€550	€590	€600
Wexford	€230	€250	€390	€430	€540	€565	€590
Wicklow	€240	€290	€440	€525	€625	€670	€740

*€30 for a single person; €35 for a couple.

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