

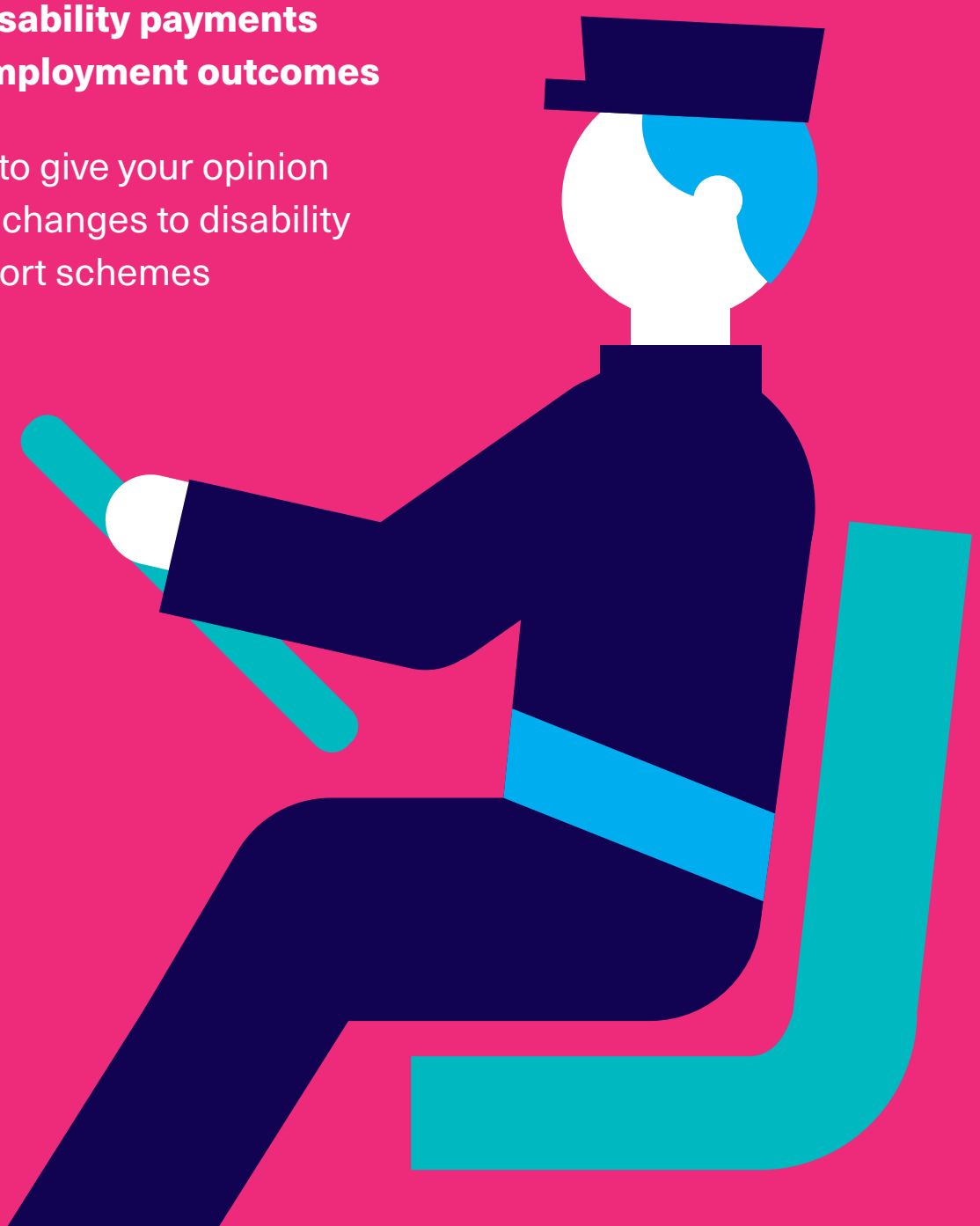
Consultation Paper:

# Make Work Pay

## Recommendation 9A

### Changing disability payments for better employment outcomes

An invitation to give your opinion  
on proposed changes to disability  
income support schemes





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## What is this consultation paper (and questionnaire) about?

The Government has asked the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection to consult with families about one of the recommendations from the *Make Work Pay for People with Disabilities Report* (2017) which may affect your family. We ask you to read this consultation paper to learn about the recommendation and then complete a questionnaire.

The recommendation we are asking you about is Recommendation 9A.

Recommendation 9A is about proposed changes to the age at which one disability income support payment (the Domiciliary Care Allowance) ends and another (Disability Allowance) starts.

This recommendation may affect your family, so it is important that we hear your views about it.

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## **Why are we proposing changes to disability income support schemes?**

### **Many people want and are able to work**

Many people with a disability can and want to work in suitable and meaningful jobs. However, poor employment prospects for people with disabilities means that many often have to rely on the social protection system for incomes.

### **Early engagement can help**

The Make Work Pay (MWP) report made a number of recommendations on how people with disabilities who want to work and can work could fulfil their employment ambitions. One of the main recommendations is for 'early engagement'. This means that the State will offer people, especially young people with disabilities, supports such as education, training and social inclusion opportunities at an early stage to help them achieve their employment goals. We have produced a separate consultation paper on early engagement which we encourage you to read. You can find it at [www.welfare.ie/makeworkpay](http://www.welfare.ie/makeworkpay)

### **Barriers need to be addressed**

Keeping children in education until they reach 18 will keep them closer to a range of options that will allow them to achieve their employment ambitions. There are concerns that giving a 16 or 17 year old a Disability Allowance payment could lead them to a lifetime outside the workforce and a dependency on income support payments.

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## We need your input

The recommendation described in this consultation paper involves changes to Disability Allowance (DA) and Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) payments. We understand the very important role that these income supports play in the lives of young people with disabilities and their families especially at a time of pressure on supporting services. The Government feels that more consultation is needed around Recommendation 9A which could affect you and your family. The aim of this consultation document and accompanying questionnaire is to:

- explain what these proposed changes in disability income support payments might mean for you and your family; and
- give you a chance to tell us what you think of them.

In partnership with a Mark Work Pay Disability Stakeholders Focus Group, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection has designed this consultation process for people with disabilities, their families and their representative and support organisations.

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## What are the proposed changes to the DCA and the DA schemes?

The MWP report sets out a vision for enabling people with disabilities to realise their employment ambitions. This will involve significant changes in the social protection system, particularly to the DCA and DA income support schemes.

### Current system

At present, Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) is a monthly payment of €309.50 to parents of children with a severe disability. The scheme is not means tested. A parent may also be eligible for Carer's Allowance. Parents also get a Carer's Support Grant of €1,700 a year. In addition, the child gets a Medical Card which is not means tested. Currently, DCA is paid to around 34,500 people.

Disability Allowance (DA) is a means-tested payment for people with a disability who are aged between 16 and 66. Anyone claiming this payment must have a medical assessment which concludes that their disability is expected to last for at least one year. It is currently paid at €193 a week (€198 from March 2018). A care provider may also be eligible for Carer's Allowance, subject to a means test. Currently, about 132,700 people get DA.

### Reports on schemes

Two reports on these schemes, published in April 2013<sup>1</sup>, recommended that DCA should be paid until age 18 years and that the DA payment should start at 18 years (and not at 16 years as it does now). The reports included comments from parents who were worried that giving a 16 year old direct access to DA would have a negative effect on their behaviour and school attendance.

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<sup>1</sup> Second report of the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare – Review of Budget 2012 proposals regarding Disability Allowance and Domiciliary Care Allowance (April 2013); Report on the review of the Domiciliary Care Allowance scheme (April 2013).

The Make Work Pay (MWP) group considered these reports. They too felt that giving Disability Allowance at age 16, before the young adult has had time to develop their full employment potential through education and training, would not allow them to achieve their employment ambitions. The MWP group said it would likely lead to a lifetime outside the workforce. They recommended that the State actively encourages young people aged 18 to 22 to avail of a range of education, training and other supports to enable them to achieve their potential, similar to others their own age.

For this to happen, they recommended that the Domiciliary Care Allowance should continue to age 18 and that payment of Disability Allowance should only start from age 18. As this change could have a significant impact on families, they also recommended consultation with parents and disability advocacy groups with a focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for young people.

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## How might the proposed changes affect me?

The changes could affect you and your family in the following ways:

### **Change to the ages at which the payments are made**

Under the proposed changes, the Domiciliary Care Allowance would continue to be paid to the parents of children with a severe disability until their child turns 18 years of age. Alongside this change, the youngest age that a person could apply for a Disability Allowance would be 18 years of age.

### **Change in employment services available**

When your child turns 18 years of age and begins to get the DA payment, they would also be given education, training and social inclusion supports to improve their capacity to take up meaningful work. Examples of such supports might include taking part in appropriate Educational and Training Board (further education and training) courses, higher education programmes and the new 'Ability' programme.<sup>2</sup> Further information on options for school leavers can be found on the National Council for Special Education website.<sup>3</sup>

### **Change in total amount of financial support**

You and your family may get less **or** more money depending on your particular circumstances. There will also be a change as to who gets the payment in the family. If the Government decides to change the current system and accept the proposed system, it will have to consider losses and gains in designing the new system.

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2 This is a new programme to support young people prepare for work. You can find details at: <https://www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/Ability%20Programme/Pages/Ability%20Programme.aspx>  
3 <http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/NCSE-Post-School-Education-Training.pdf>



Table 1:  
Comparing the current and proposed system

Current system (payment rates from March 2018)		
DCA	€309.50 a month	Payable <b>up to 16 years</b> to parent or guardian
DA	€198 a week	Payable to people with a disability <b>from 16 years</b> onward
Proposed system (under Recommendation 9A)		
DCA	€309.50 a month	Payable <b>up to 18 years</b> to parent or guardian
DA	€198 a week	Payable to people with a disability <b>from 18 years</b> onward

The conditions for getting both payments are different. Under the proposed system, the age where a person can get the DCA payment will be extended for a further two years up to 18. During the two years in which the DCA payment is extended, the parent would be paid a Carer's Support Grant and receive a medical card. There might also be a continued entitlement to a Carer's Allowance, subject to a means test.

Under the current system, not all DCA recipients receive a Disability Allowance when they reach 16. Under the proposed system, the decision would be made when the young person with a disability reaches 18. Their parent or guardian would continue to receive the DCA payments until then.

Family 1	
<p><b>Current family circumstances</b></p>	<p>Family 1 includes a child (Kevin) with a disability. Kevin's family receives a DCA payment each month. His family expect that when Kevin reaches 16 years he <b>will meet</b> the conditions to get a DA payment.</p>
<p><b>Expected changes to income support from proposed system (Recommendation 9A)</b></p>	<p>Under the proposed system, Kevin's family would expect to <b>get less</b> income support for the two years when Kevin is 16 and 17 years of age compared with what they would expect to get under the current system.</p>
<p><b>Visual</b></p>	<p>The graph plots Income on the vertical axis and Age on the horizontal axis. A solid red line (Current system) and a dashed blue line (Proposed system) both show a constant income level from age 0 to 16. At age 16, the proposed system line drops significantly below the current system line, and this area is shaded with diagonal lines and labeled 'Loss'. The x-axis has markers for 16 and 18.</p>

Family 2	
<p><b>Current family circumstances</b></p>	<p>Family 2 includes a child (Emily) with a disability. Emily's family receives a DCA payment each month. The family expects that when Emily reaches 16 years she <b>will not</b> meet the conditions for DA.</p>
<p><b>Expected changes to income support from proposed system (Recommendation 9A)</b></p>	<p>Under the proposed system, Emily's family would expect to <b>get more</b> income support for the two years when Emily is 16 and 17 years of age compared with what they might expect currently. Emily's family would likely get two years DCA payment that they wouldn't get under the current system.</p>
<p><b>Visual</b></p>	<p>The graph plots Income on the vertical axis and Age on the horizontal axis. A solid red line (Current system) and a dashed blue line (Proposed system) both show a constant income level from age 0 to 16. At age 16, the proposed system line rises above the current system line, and this area is shaded with diagonal lines and labeled 'Gain'. The x-axis has markers for 16 and 18.</p>

## **Change in who gets the payment in the family**

DA is paid to the person with the disability. DCA is paid to the carer – a parent in most cases. If the recommended change was made, a person with a disability would not get a payment in their own right until they reach 18 years of age.

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## **When would the proposed system start?**

No decision has yet been made as to when the proposed system would start. The Government wants to get your views before considering any changes to the two schemes. It would then discuss and decide on changes, if any, before it would introduce them.

Please complete the questionnaire on Recommendation 9A.

You can find a link to the questionnaire at [www.welfare.ie/makeworkpay](http://www.welfare.ie/makeworkpay)

