



Social protection: main supports and programmes, and key changes since 2009

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For information

Subject	Social protection: main supports and programmes, and key changes since 2009
Author	Commission on Taxation and Welfare Secretariat
Version	Final
Date	18 June 2021

Key Points

- The changes to the Irish social protection system since 2009 are reflective of a change in approach moving from the passive provision of social welfare payments to encouraging and supporting more active engagement with employment services, particularly for more vulnerable groups in society.
- There is a requirement for jobseekers to engage with the Public Employment Service in order to avail of jobseeker's payments.
- Lone parents are encouraged to engage with the Public Employment Service and avail of activation measures as their children grow older. Employees with children are provided with income support if their income is below a certain threshold.
- People with illness, disability and caring responsibilities are supported if they are unable to work. Additionally, those with disabilities are supported in entering the labour market to the extent of their capacity, if they so wish.
- The calculation of the State pension (contributory) has been changed to facilitate those who have been out of the work force, for example, due to family or caring requirements. The rate thereof has also increased since 2009.

Note: Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this document, this material is provided as a guide only and is not professional advice, including legal advice. It should not be assumed that the guidance is comprehensive and the authors cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions.

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1. Introduction

The paper entitled “Introduction to the Irish Social Protection system” provides a background to the Irish Social Protection system. The purpose of this paper is to provide additional detail on the main supports and programmes, and to outline the key changes to these since 2009.

Section 3 sets out the level of social protection expenditure and the number of recipients. Section 4 outlines how PRSI works and the changes to it since 2009. Section 5 outlines the organisational changes that took place in respect of the provision of social welfare benefits and employment services. Section 6 considers unemployment services and jobseekers payments. Section 7 covers child and family benefits. Section 8 discusses supports for illness, disability and caring. Section 9 sets out the changes to pensions including to the rate of the State pension (contributory).

2. Executive summary

Social protection expenditure has remained fairly constant since 2009. However, 2020 and 2021 estimates indicate a notable increase due to the Covid-19 supports. In terms of expenditure and recipients in specific areas, the greatest changes since 2009 have been in relation to pensions and working age payments, with the former increasing and the latter decreasing.

Provision of social protection payments and employment services has been reformed with the creation of Intreo, the Public Employment Service (PES). The approach has moved from a passive one to a more active one encouraging engagement with employment, education and training services. This is reflected in the provision of jobseeker payments as well as the employment supports and activation programmes that have been brought in since 2009. Additionally, jobseeker payments have been extended to self-employed people, in addition to employees.

In terms of supports for children and families, support for lone parents has changed to provide greater encouragement for lone parents to engage in activation and employment services as their children become older. Additionally, income support has been introduced for employees with children whose income is below a particular threshold.

People with illness, disability or caring responsibilities are significantly less likely to be involved in the labour market. While supports for those with illness, disability and caring who are unable to work have changed very little since 2009, there is a greater focus on enabling and supporting employment, particularly for those with disabilities, where they wish to and in accordance with their capacity.

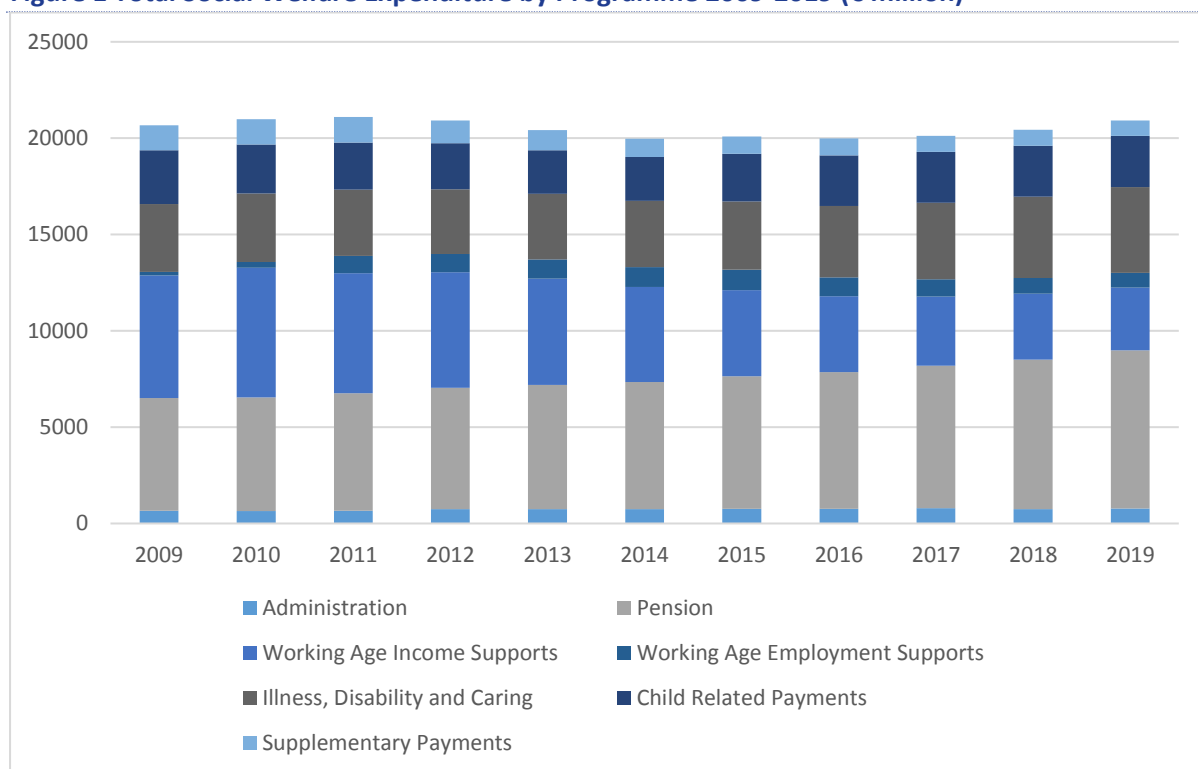
The main changes to pensions since 2009 is how entitlement to the State pension (contributory) is calculated; particularly for those who have not made sufficient PRSI contributions to avail of the maximum rate. The rates of the State pension (contributory) have also increased between 2009 and 2021.

3. Social protection expenditure and recipients 2009 – 2019

Total social protection expenditure has remained relatively constant over the period from 2009 to 2019 (latest data available). In 2009 total expenditure was €20.5 billion; in 2019 it was €20.9 billion. The lowest levels of expenditure since 2009 was in 2014 and 2016 of €19.8.¹

However, revised estimates for 2020 and 2021 social protection expenditure place this figure at a possible €28.04 billion² and €29.14 billion³ respectively, which includes spending on the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP), the Covid-19 illness payment, and the wage subsidy schemes.

Figure 1 Total Social Welfare Expenditure by Programme 2009-2019 (€ million)



Source: Department of Social Protection Annual Statistics Report 2019

¹ Department of Social Protection Annual Statistics Report 2019, available [here](#).

² 2020 estimate available [here](#).

³ 2021 Estimate available [here](#).

The below tables set out Ireland's social protection schemes as measured by expenditure and the number of recipients in 2019 (latest data available), along with a percentage increase/decrease when compared to 2009.

Table 1: Expenditure in largest categories and total

Expenditure category	Expenditure in 2019 (millions)	Percentage change from 2009
Total Pensions	€8,214.99	+40.3%
Illness, disability and caring	€4,448.64	+26.1%
Working age payments	€4,019.72	-38.6%
Child-related payments	€2,654.79	-4.6%
Total expenditure	€20,909.19	+1.2%

Source: Department of Social Protection Annual Statistical Reports

Table 2: Recipients in largest categories and total

Expenditure category	Number of recipients	Percentage change from 2009
Child-related payments	697,162	+10.6%
Pensions	649,339	+33.8%
Illness, disability and caring	399,768	+34.9%
Working age payments	315,819	-44.6%
Total recipients	2,078,057	-0.5%

Source: Department of Social Protection Annual Statistical Reports

Expenditure on, and the number of recipients of pensions has significantly increased since 2009. These increases are due to demographic changes reflective of an aging population⁴, rate increases (see Section 9.2 for further detail), and improved contribution records.

Expenditure on, and the number of recipients of working age payments has significantly decreased since 2009, which reflects the large number of people in receipt of jobseeker payments in 2009 and the subsequent decrease.

⁴ Between 2009 and 2020 the number of people aged 66 and over increased by 45% ([CSO data](#)).

4. PRSI

Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) is paid by those aged between 16 and 66. PRSI is used to fund the Social Insurance Fund.

Employee's PRSI

There are a number of contribution classes of PRSI (class A, J, E, B, C, D, H, K, M, S and P) which apply to different categories of people. The most common classes are class A which applies to the majority of employees⁵ and class S which applies to self-employed people.

Class A PRSI:

- Employees who earn over €352 per week pay PRSI a rate of 4% on all earnings. If earnings are below €352 per week no employee's PRSI is due.
- For people earning between €351.01 and €424 per week, a tapered PRSI credit is available that reduces the amount of PRSI payable.

Class S PRSI:

- Self-employed people pay PRSI at a rate of 4% of annual earnings subject to a *de minimis* amount of €500.
- Income under €5,000 per year is exempt from PRSI.

Employer's PRSI

- Employer's PRSI is paid at a rate of 8.8% on weekly earnings up to €398 and at a rate of 11.05% on weekly earnings over €398.
- Self-employed people do not pay employer's PRSI.

Since 2009 there have been a number of changes to employer's PRSI. Both the thresholds at which PRSI becomes payable as well as the rates of employer's PRSI have increased.

The lower rate of employer's PRSI has increased from 8.5% to 8.8%, and the higher rate of employer's PRSI has increased from 10.75% to 11.05%⁶ with effect from 2020. The income threshold for the higher rate of employer's PRSI has been increased from weekly earnings of €356 to €398. This was

⁵ Class A applies to all public/civil servants recruited since 6 April 1995. Classes B, C, D, and H include public sector recruited before 6 April 95. Class K applies to certain public office holders such as the President, the Attorney General, and members of Oireachtas.

⁶ This includes an increase to 1% in the National Training Fund Levy, which is included as part of employer's PRSI. However, this is not paid into the Social Insurance Fund; instead it is paid into the National Training Fund. Similarly, a Health Contribution, which was abolished in 2011 and replaced with the Universal Social Charge, was included in the employee's share of PRSI and was also not paid into the Social Insurance Fund, instead going to the Department of Health.

based on the Low Pay Commission recommendation to ensure that any increases in the minimum wage would not create a disincentive to work.

Additionally, since 2009 changes have been made to PRSI so that self-employed individuals are now able to access a greater number of social insurance benefits (93% of those available to employees), including Jobseeker's Benefit (see below) and Invalidity Pension. Therefore, while access to benefits for self-employed people has increased, what they are required to contribute has not increased in a commensurate manner. However, PRSI contributions from self-employed people have increased since 2009, as outlined below.

There have been no increases to the PRSI contributions for employees since 2009, with the rate remaining at 4%. However, the contribution from self-employed people has increased from 3% to 4%. In addition, the minimum annual contribution for self-employed people has increased from €253 in 2009 to €500. The earning threshold above which self-employed people must pay PRSI has decreased from €6,604 in 2009 to €5,000 per year.

Jobseeker's Benefit (Self-Employed) was introduced in November 2019 and is a taxable weekly payment to people who lose their self-employment income. It is based on their class S PRSI contributions.

5. Organisational changes

Ireland's social welfare and public employment services have undergone significant change and restructuring since 2009. There has been a move from the provision of passive welfare support to a focus on more proactive activation measures and employment programmes to support unemployed people.

Intreo (the Public Employment Service) was established in 2010 integrating the provision of social welfare benefits and access to employment services in a 'one-stop-shop'.⁷ Intreo replaced and merged the benefit and employment services that were previously provided separately by the Department of Social Protection (DSP), FÁS and the Community Welfare Service.

Jobseekers are required to engage in job search, or to undertake further education, training or employment programmes, as a condition of the receipt of payments. This model is underpinned by the principle of 'mutual obligation'. Consequently, there are also sanctions imposed on those who are unemployed and fail to fully engage with the Public Employment Service.

⁷ For an evaluation of the effectiveness of Intreo activation reforms, see this [ESRI report](#).

The Intreo model is based on a ‘work-first’ policy where jobs are provided to those who are ready to enter or re-enter the labour market, and education and training programmes are provided for those claimants who are not. This is underpinned by increased engagement between the DSP and employers in order to encourage them to hire individuals from the Live Register⁸.

6. Jobseeker payments

6.1 Jobseeker’s Benefit and Jobseeker’s Allowance

Jobseeker's Benefit is a taxable weekly payment to people who are out of work and who have paid sufficient social insurance (PRSI) contributions. Jobseeker’s Benefit is time limited. Since April 2013, the maximum duration for which a person can receive Jobseeker’s Benefit is nine months for claimants with 260 or more contributions and six months for claimants with less than 260 contributions – the duration was previously 12 months.⁹

The rates of Jobseekers Benefit and changes since 2009 are set out in Table 3. The rationale for the age based structure is to act as an incentive for young people to return to education and training where they may be eligible for additional supports.

Table 3: Rates of Jobseeker's Benefit (changes 2009 – 2021)

Year	Age	Rate (per week)
2009	18 – 66	€204.30
2011	18 – 66	€188.00
2013	25 and over	€188.00
	22 – 24	€144.00
	18 – 21	€100.00
2019	26 and over	€203.00
	25	€157.00
	18 – 24	€112.70
2020 and 2021	18 – 66	€203

Source: Department of Social Protection Rates of Payment

⁸ Ireland’s count of jobseeker claims (called the live register) includes both those receiving jobseeker’s payment as well as those who receive no payment but who receive credited contributions to protect their social insurance record.

⁹ More detail on Jobseeker’s Benefit available [here](#).

Jobseeker's Allowance is a means tested payment available to people who were on Jobseeker's Benefit but who can no longer receive it as entitlement has ended, due to the time limits noted above. The rates of Jobseekers Allowance and changes since 2009 are set out in Table 4.

Table 4: Rates of Jobseeker's Allowance (changes 2009 – 2021)

Year	Age	Rate (per week)
2009	20 and over	€204.30
	Under 20	€100
2011	25 and over	€188
	22 – 24	€144
	18 – 21	€100
2019	26 and over	€203
	25	€157.80
	18 – 24	€112.70
2020 and 2021	25 and over	€203
	18 - 24	€112.70

Source: Department of Social Protection Rates of Payment

The net replacement rate, which is the proportion of average earnings replaced by jobseeker payments, decreased slightly from 30% in 2009 to 29% in 2020 (or 41.6% in 2009 to 38.8% in 2020 for people earning two thirds of average earnings).¹⁰

6.2 Employment supports and activation programmes

The DSP provides employment support and advice to jobseekers. Jobseekers include people who are getting a jobseeker's payment, people who are signing for credits¹¹ as well as people who are unemployed but not eligible for a payment. However, engaging with the Public Employment Service and availing of employment supports and advice is a mandatory requirement for people getting a jobseekers payment.

Labour market activation policies are designed to give jobseekers a better chance of finding employment. Jobseekers are expected to fully engage with this process and use the supports offered

¹⁰ Based on a short-term unemployed, single claimant, with no children, and excluding housing benefits. Source: [EU tax and benefit indicators database](#)

¹¹ Under certain circumstances a person may be awarded credits without receiving a Benefit or Allowance payment. This may apply, for example, in the case of a person who has exhausted entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit but who does not qualify for Jobseeker's Allowance due to their means. In this case, the person may be entitled to 'sign' for credits to protect their other social insurance entitlements.

during the activation process which includes job search assistance, education or training schemes, and employment support schemes to help them back into the workplace.

People who do not engage with the activation process may have their payment reduced and can subsequently be disqualified from their payment for up to nine weeks. Jobseekers aged over 62 are not required to engage with the activation process.

Since 2009, a number of employment supports and activation programmes have been introduced (and ceased) – see Appendix 1 for an overview of these.

7. Child and family benefits

7.1 Supports for lone parents

The One-Parent Family payment provides income support to lone parent families with a child or children up to seven years of age. Jobseeker Transition Payment (JST) is available to people who are not cohabiting and whose youngest child is aged between seven and 13 years inclusive. There is no requirement to seek full-time work, although the parent is required to engage with Intreo for activation during this time, and can take up employment.

In 2009 the rate for One-Parent Family payment was €209.80 per week for someone aged 48 or over, €206.80 per week for someone aged 36 – 47 years, and €204.30 per week for someone aged 24 – 35 years. The current rate is €203 per week, with increases for a qualified child or children.

At the same time as the JST payment was introduced, a number of changes were introduced to the One-Parent Family payment between 2012 and 2015 mainly related to the eligibility criteria to qualify for it. Prior to these changes, lone parents were able to receive the payment until their youngest child turned 18, or 22 if the child remained in education. By 2015 One-Parent Family payment was only available to lone parents in respect of children up to the age of seven years old, with those whose children were older than seven transferring to the JST.

Changes were also made to the income disregards¹² that apply to the One-Parent Family payment (see table 6 below). These were reduced between 2012 and 2014 for both new and existing recipients. These were then increased between 2017 and 2020. An earnings limit of €425 per week that was removed from 8 April 2021.

¹² Income disregards are certain sources of income that are not included in a means test.

Table 5: Summary of changes to the One-Parent-Family payment - age thresholds

Payment of One-Parent-Family payment ceases when the youngest child reaches these maximum age thresholds:			
	From 4 July 2013	From 3 July 2014	From 2 July 2015
If One-Parent-Family payment commenced before 27 April 2011	17	16	7
If One-Parent-Family payment commenced between 27 April 2011 and 2 May 2012	12	10	7
If One-Parent-Family payment commenced on or after 3 May 2012	10	7	7

Source: Department of Social Protection and Indecon Review

Table 6: Weekly Level of Income Disregard (2012 - 2021)

Year	Weekly Level of Income Disregard
2009 - 2011	€146.50
2012	€130
2013	€110
2014	€90
2015	€90
2016	€90
2017	€110
2018	€130
2019	€150
2020	€165
2021	€165

Source: Department of Social Protection Rates of Payment

The rationale for these changes was based on research showing low employment rates, high benefit receipt rates, and high poverty and deprivation rates of lone parents.¹³ Additionally, long-term welfare

¹³ See ESRI paper on Lone-Parent Incomes and Work Incentives [here](#).

payments not contingent on job-search or employment participation have been shown to increase the likelihood and rate of poverty.¹⁴ Consequently, the aim of these changes was to increase activation and encourage lone parents to return to the labour market as their children grew older. The ESRI also highlight the effect of childcare costs as a barrier to lone parent labour market participation, in particular constituting a disincentive to female labour market participation.¹⁵

7.2 In-work support

Family Income Supplement was replaced by the Working Family Payment in 2018. The Working Family Payment is a tax-free payment made on a weekly basis to employees with children and is intended to provide additional financial support to those on low pay.

The Working Family Payment is a means-tested payment for individuals who are in employment and working for 38 or more hours per fortnight. The weekly family income must be below a certain amount based on family size, and the hours worked can be combined between spouses, civil partners and cohabiting parents. The child or children in the family must be under 18, or between 18 and 22 years of age and in full-time education.

Working Family Payment is 60% of the difference between the weekly family income (gross taxable earnings less tax, employee PRSI, USC) and any other income received, and the income limit that applies to the family size, as set out in Table 5.

The rates of the Family Income Supplement/Working Family Payment have changed as follows:

Table 7: Rate of Working Family Payment 2013 and 2021

No. of Children	2013: Weekly family income less than:	2021: Weekly family income less than:
1 child	€506	€541
2 children	€602	€642
3 children	€703	€743
4 children	€824	€834
5 children	€950	€960
6 children	€1,066	€1,076
7 children	€1,202	€1,212
8 or more	€1,298	€1,308

Source (Department of Social Protection, available [here](#)).

¹⁴ See ESRI paper on Lone-Parent Incomes and Work Incentives [here](#).

¹⁵ See ESRI paper on Lone-Parent Incomes and Work Incentives [here](#).

7.3 Child benefit

Child benefit is a universal payment. It is paid monthly to the parents or guardians of children who are under 16. It is paid in respect of children who are under 18 if they are in full-time education or training, or if they have a disability and cannot support themselves.

The rates of child benefit¹⁶ have changed between 2009 and 2021 as follows:

Table 8: Monthly Rates of Child Benefit 2009 - 2021

Year	1 st child	2 nd child	3 rd child	4 th and subsequent children
2009	€166	€166	€203	€203
2010	€150	€150	€187	€187
2011	€140	€140	€167	€177
2012	€140	€140	€148	€160
2013	€130	€130	€130	€140
2014	€130	€130	€130	€130
2015	€135	€135	€135	€135
2016 – 2021	€140	€140	€140	€140

Source: Department of Social Protection, available [here](#)

8. Illness, disability and caring

There are a variety of benefits available to those with an illness or disability, and to those who are involved in caring. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the schemes together with the qualifying criteria and rates. Overall, the changes to the rates of payments in respect of illness, disability and caring schemes since 2009 have been minimal.

The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 - 2025¹⁷ sets targets where the Government commits to reduce poverty, and improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities. The primary target is to reduce the percentage of people with disability who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion from 36.9% in 2018 to no more than 28.7% in 2025 and to no more than 22.7% by 2030. This would put Ireland as a top five country, based on EU rankings. Additionally, there is a sub-target to increase the employment level of 22.3%, based on Census 2016, to 25% by Census 2021 and 33% by Census 2026.

¹⁶ In respect of multiple births, child benefit is paid at one and a half times the normal rate for twins and double the normal rate for all other multiple births. Until 2011 there were also special grants for multiple births with payment at a rate of €635 at birth, at age four, and at age 12.

¹⁷ Available [here](#), see Chapter 6.

Statistics show that those with disabilities are only half as likely to be in employment as others of working age, for a variety of complex reasons. There is a comprehensive employment strategy in place that aims to ensure that people with disabilities, who are able to, and who want to work, are enabled to do so.¹⁸

Pathways to Work is Ireland's National Employment Services Strategy, it sets out how Intreo delivers employment services, including to people with disabilities. The Pathways to Work 2021 – 2025 strategy is expected to be published shortly.

9. Pensions

There are two types of State pension, the State pension (contributory), which is based on social insurance contributions, and a means-tested pension. Receipt of these pensions begins at age 66. However, the age at which someone retires may not necessarily correspond to the age at which they can start receiving their pension.

Consequently, an interim payment, known as the State Pension (Transition) was introduced in 2005 and paid at a rate of €230.30 per week prior to being abolished from 1 January 2014.

A similar transitional payment, the State Pension Transition was introduced in 2020 to qualified people aged between 65 and 66 who have retired and are not yet receiving a State pension. It is not means-tested.

There are two methods of calculating entitlements to the State pension (contributory), discussed in Section 9.1. This is relevant to those who have not made sufficient PRSI contributions to avail of the maximum rate of the State pension (contributory).

9.1 Entitlement to State pension (contributory)

The way in which pension entitlements and rates are calculated has changed since 2009. Previously, these entitlements were based on a yearly average of qualifying contributions, either paid or credited, from the earliest contribution to the end of the tax year prior to reaching pension age.

However, for those applying for the State pension (contributory) after 1 September 2012, and who do not qualify for the maximum rate of pension due to gaps in their PRSI record a new method of calculating entitlement applies, if it is more beneficial. This new method takes into account the total

¹⁸ Available [here](#).

number of PRSI contributions paid, rather than when they were paid. It also provides for people who spent time outside the paid workforce, while raising a family or in a caring role.

9.2 Changes in the rates of the State pension (contributory)

The below table sets out the changes to the rates of the State pension (contributory) since 2009.

Table 9: Personal weekly rates for the State pension (contributory) based on yearly average contributions (2009 - 2021)

Number of yearly average contributions						
Year	48 or over	40 - 47	30 - 39	20 - 29	15 - 19	10 - 14
2021	€248.30	€243.40	€223.20	€211.40	€161.80	€99.20
2020	€248.30	€243.40	€243.40	€243.40	€186.20	€124.20
2019	€248.30	€243.40	€223.20	€211.40	€161.80	€99.20
2018	€243.30	€238.50	€218.50	€207.10	€158.50	€97.20
2017	€238.30	€233.60	€214.20	€202.80	€155.20	€95.20
2016	€233.30	€228.70	€209.70	€198.60	€152.00	€93
2015	€230.30	€225.80	€207	€196	€150	€92
2014	€230.30	€225.80	€207	€196	€150	€92
2013	€230.30	€225.80	€207	€196	€150	€92
2012	€230.30	€225.80	€225.80	€225.80	€172.70	€115.20
2011	€230.30	€225.80	€225.80	€225.80	€172.70	€115.20
2010	€230.30	€225.80	€225.80	€225.80	€172.70	€115.20
2009	€230.30	€225.80	€225.80	€225.80	€172.70	€115.20

Source: Department of Social Protection, available [here](#).

10. Conclusion

Employment is an important means of reducing poverty as well as increasing social inclusion and participation. Consequently, many of the reforms to the social welfare system since 2009 have been based on encouraging greater employment where possible, particularly among more vulnerable groups in society.

Appendix 1 Employment and activation schemes

Table 10: Employment and activation Schemes and changes since 2009

Programme	Description	Status
Back to Work Enterprise Allowance	Provides support for a period of two years to people who have lost their job and wish to start their own business.	This iteration of the scheme was introduced in 2009 and is ongoing.
Part-Time Job Incentive	Enables certain people who are in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance to take up part-time work and receive this instead of their jobseeker's payment.	Ongoing.
TÚS – Community Work Placement Initiative	This is a community placement scheme to provide short-term working opportunities for unemployed people to benefit the community. It is provided by community and voluntary organisations.	Introduced in 2011 and is ongoing.
JobBridge	Provided an internship of six to nine months to someone who was signing on as available for work and receiving a payment or credits for at least three months.	Introduced in 2011 but ceased in 2016.
Gateway	Provided short-term work placements for people who were unemployed through City and County Councils to carry out beneficial work within communities.	Introduced in 2013 but ceased in 2018.
SOLAS full-time training for unemployed people	State agency that manages a range of Further Education and Training Programmes, including Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Skills to Advance, eCollege and the European Globalisation Fund. Responsible for Managing the Safe Pass Health and Safety Awareness Training Programme, The Constructions Skills Certification Scheme and the Quarrying Skills Certification Scheme. Manages the National Skills Database. Designated intermediary for the European Social Fund Programme for Employment, Inclusion and Learning.	Introduced in 2011, replaced FÁS Training and is ongoing.

JobsPlus	Provides a financial incentive to employers who recruit employees who were long term unemployed on the Live Register.	Introduced in 2013 and is ongoing.
Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS)	Work experience placement programme which is targeted at jobseekers who are aged 18-24 who are long-term unemployed or face barriers to employment.	Introduced in 2018 and is ongoing.

Source: Central Statistics Office (CSO), available [here](#).

Appendix 2 Illness, disability and caring schemes

Table 11: Description of and qualifying criteria for illness, disability and caring social welfare schemes

Scheme	Qualifying criteria	Rates comparison 2009 – 2021 (maximum personal rate)
Blind Pension: Means-tested payment made to blind and visually impaired people.	Age 16 – 66 years old. Provision of an eye test.	€204.30 per week (2009) €203.00 per week (2021)
Carer's Allowance: Means-tested payment to people on low incomes who are looking after a person who needs support because of age, disability or illness (including mental illness).	Living with or providing full time care and attention. 18 years old. Not engaged in employment, self-employment, training or education for more than 18.5 hours per week.	€220.50 per week for one person; €330.75 per week for more than one person (2009) €219 per week for one person; €328 per week for more than one person (2021)
Disability Allowance: A means-tested weekly payment made to a person with a disability.	Aged 16 – 66 years old. Have an injury, disease or physical or mental disability that has continued or may be expected to continue for at least one year. Be substantially restricted in undertaking work that would otherwise be suitable for a person of the same age, experience and qualifications.	€204.30 per week (2009) €203 per week (2021)
Domiciliary Care Allowance: Monthly payment for a child under 16 years of age with a severe disability.	Not means tested. Child under 16 who requires ongoing care and attention substantially in excess of the care and attention normally required by a child of the same age. Carer must live at home with the person.	€309.50 per month (2021)

<p>Carer's Support Grant: Annual payment made to carers.</p>	<p>Paid automatically to people getting Carer's Allowance.</p> <p>May be paid to other carers who are aged 16 or over, living with the person being cared for and caring for them on a full time basis for at least 6 months.</p>	<p>€1,850 (2021)</p>
<p>Carer's Benefit: Payment made to insured people who leave the workforce to care for a person(s) in need of full-time care and attention.</p>	<p>Carer's Benefit can be provided for a total of 104 weeks for each person being cared for. This does not have to be a single continuous period.</p> <p>The person must be 16 or over.</p> <p>The person must have been employed for at least 8 weeks in the previous 26 week period.</p> <p>The person must give up work to provide full time care or attention to a person not living in an institution. Medical certification is required to demonstrate that the person is so incapacitated as to require full time care and attention.</p> <p>Receipt of carer's benefit is based on meeting a certain level of PRSI contributions.</p> <p>Not engaged in employment, self-employment, training or education for more than 18.5 hours per week. Maximum earning of €332.50 net income per week to qualify.</p> <p>An increase may be claimed for a dependent child.</p>	<p>€221.20 per week for one person; €331.80 per week for more than one person (2009)</p> <p>€220 per week for one person; €330 per week for more than one person (2021)</p>
<p>Disablement Benefit: benefit under the Occupational Injuries Scheme to a person who suffers loss of physical or mental faculty because of an accident at work, an accident travelling directly to or from work,</p>	<p>Paid weekly or every 4 weeks if the disablement is assessed at 20% or more (a lump sum if the disablement is assessed at less than 20%).</p>	<p>€211.90 per week for 90% disablement, €47.10 per week for 20% disablement (2009)</p>

or a prescribed disease contracted at work.	<p>The extent of disablement is assessed following an examination by a Medical Assessor.</p> <p>Must have been in employment at the time the accident, injury or disease was suffered.</p>	<p>€234 per week for 100% disablement; €210.60 for 90% disablement, €46.80 for 20% disablement (2021)</p>
Illness Benefit: paid if a person is unable to work if they are sick or ill.	<p>Must be under 66 and satisfy the PRSI conditions.</p> <p>Should be claimed from the first day of illness and within 6 weeks of becoming ill.</p> <p>The duration of the receipt of illness benefit is limited to two years.</p>	<p>€204.30 per week (2009)</p> <p>€203 per week (2021)</p>
Injury Benefit: weekly payment under the Occupational Benefits Scheme If you are unfit to work due to: an accident at work; an accident while travelling directly to or from work (on an unbroken journey); or an occupational disease.	<p>Must be unfit for work for more than 6 days as a result (excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays).</p> <p>Must be in employment.</p> <p>Can be received for up to 26 weeks.</p>	<p>€204.30 per week (2009)</p> <p>€203 per week (2020)</p>
Invalidity Pension: weekly payment to people who cannot work because of a long-term illness or disability and are covered by PRSI.	<p>Must have 260 PRSI contributions and 48 weeks of paid or credited PRSI contributions in the last or second last year before the start date of permanent incapacity for work.</p> <p>Must have been incapable for work for at least 12 months and likely to be incapable for at least another 12 months or be permanently incapable of work.</p>	<p>€209.80 per week (2009)</p> <p>€208.50 per week (2021)</p>
Medical Care Scheme: if you are injured at work, on an unbroken journey to/from work, or you contract a prescribed occupational disease, benefits available under the Occupational Injuries Scheme.	<p>Reasonable and necessary medical expenses are covered.</p> <p>Must notify the Department of Social Protection within 6 weeks of the start of the medical treatment.</p> <p>Must be in employment insurable at PRSI class A, B, D, J or M.</p>	

Source: Department of Social Protection

Appendix 3 Additional reading material

Recommended reading

- [**NESC Report 151**](#) **On the Future of Social Welfare in Ireland**

This report considers the challenges the social welfare system in Ireland faces due to economic, social and demographic changes and makes suggestions as to how the system might be changed to adapt to them.

It provides an overview of underlying concepts, the history and evolution of the Irish social welfare system, the challenges, opportunities and potential for reform and the implications of Covid-19.

- [Rates of payment from the Department of Social Protection](#)