

Budget 2021

Main social welfare changes and rates of payments



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Employment Affairs
and Social Protection

€25.13 billion to be spent on Social Welfare in 2021

State Pension – Qualifying age to remain at 66 years

Fuel Allowance - an extra €3.50 in Fuel Allowance payment per week

Living Alone Allowance - €5 increase per week

Carers – Carer’s Support Grant to be increased by €150 to €1,850

Increases for Qualified Children - €5 weekly increase for children age 12 and over;
- €2 weekly for children up to age 12

Illness Benefit – number of ‘waiting days’ will reduce from 6 days to 3 days

Parent’s Benefit – increases to 5 weeks for children born or adopted from 1 November 2019

Disability Allowance – earnings disregard will be increased by €20 per week to €140

People with disabilities – €1,000 grant to help people with disabilities to access employment

Hot School Meals programme – €5.5 million boost for programme extension in 2021

Working Family Payment threshold – €10 increase in weekly threshold (up to three children)

Working Lone Parents – income limit of €425 from employment to be removed

Widowed Parents - grant increases to €8,000 (up from €6,000) for recently bereaved partners

Island Allowance - increases from €12.70 to €20 per week

Employment Supports – additional €10 million in funding to help people get back to work with specific focus on youth unemployment

Self-employed workers – can earn up to €480 a month and keep their Pandemic Unemployment Payment

Funding for €1,000 COVID-19 Enterprise Support Grant for self-employed - doubled from €12m to €24m

Christmas Bonus will be paid in early December 2020 – 15 month requirement reduced to 4 months for PUP and Jobseekers

Improvements for Pensioners

- State Pension Qualifying Age to remain at age 66 from January – legislation to be implemented by end 2020.
- €5 increase in the weekly Living Alone Allowance from €14 to €19 paid to people aged 66 and over who are living alone – over 221,000 pensioners, widows/widowers and people with disabilities to benefit.
- Over 600,000 pensioners will benefit from the Christmas Bonus Double Payment.
- Fuel Allowance will increase by €3.50 to €28.00 per week – over 375,000 households to benefit.
- Island Allowance (paid to people living on certain offshore islands) to increase to €20 per week from January – an increase of €7.30 - first increase to the Island Allowance since it was introduced in 2000.
- Grant of up to €500 will be paid for hearing aids without requiring it to be matched by the customer.
- Hearing Aid repairs of up to €100 will no longer require matching funding by the customer.

Families and Children

- Hot School Meals programme – Additional €5.5m for programme commencing in January 2021.
- €5 increase for qualified child dependants aged 12 and over, in all weekly payments.
- €2 increase for qualified child dependants up to age 12, in all weekly payments.
- Parent's Benefit increases to 5 weeks for parents of children born or adopted from November 2019 – an increase of 3 weeks.
- €10 increase in the weekly income threshold for Working Family Payment for families with up to three children - to help working parents on low incomes.
- Working lone parents will no longer lose their One-Parent Family Payment when their employment income exceeds the current €425 limit. This limit of €425 will be removed from April 2021.
- Newly widowed parents with dependent children will receive a grant of €8,000 from January 2021 – an increase of €2,000.

Supports for People in Work

- The number of 'waiting days' for Illness Benefit will reduce from 6 days to 3 days for all new claims from the end of February 2021.
- Parent's Benefit increases to 5 weeks for parents of children born or adopted from November 2019 – an increase of 3 weeks.
- €10 increase in the weekly income threshold for Working Family Payment for families with up to three children - to help working parents on low incomes.
- Working lone parents will no longer lose their One-Parent Family Payment when their employment income exceeds the current €425 limit. This limit of €425 will be removed from April 2021.

Supporting Carers and People with Disabilities

- €5 increase for qualified child dependants aged 12 and over, in all weekly payments.
- €2 increase for qualified child dependants up to age 12, in all weekly payments.
- Fuel Allowance will increase by €3.50 to €28.00 per week – over 375,000 households to benefit.
- Highest ever Carer's Support Grant of €1,850 per year (increase of €150) to be paid in 2021 - to benefit over 130,000 carers.

Supporting Carers and People with Disabilities (continued)

- €5 increase in the weekly Living Alone Allowance from €14 to €19 for people with disabilities who are living alone – over 221,000 to benefit.
- Earnings disregard for people receiving Disability Allowance who are working to increase by €20 per week to €140.
- New €1,000 Training Grant to help people with disabilities who are seeking employment.

Supports for People who are unemployed or on PUP

- A Christmas Bonus of 100% will be paid on an exceptional basis this year to recipients of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment and equivalent recipients of Jobseeker's Payments who have been on these payments for four months or more.
- Self-employed workers will be able to earn up to €480 a month gross and keep their Pandemic Unemployment Payment.
- Funding for €1,000 COVID-19-Enterprise Support Grant doubled to €24 million.
- The Part-Time Job Incentive scheme to be made available to the self-employed who intend to resume their business but can only do so intermittently or on a limited/reduced basis when they leave the PUP.
- €10 million is being provided towards employment supports for people who are unemployed, with specific focus on youth unemployment. This is in addition to the €112 million provided in the July Stimulus package.

Christmas Bonus to be paid to 1.5 million people this year

€349.3 million to be paid to long-term welfare recipients in December 2020

A 100% Christmas Bonus will be paid in December 2020 to recipients of long-term Social Welfare payments (min €20 payment).

People in receipt of the following payments will receive the Bonus:

- State Pensions and Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's Pensions
- Invalidity Pension, Blind Pension, Disability Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit, Partial Capacity Benefit, Disablement Benefit, Domiciliary Care Allowance and Guardian's payments.
- One-Parent Family Payment, Long-term Jobseeker's Allowance, Jobseeker's Transition Payment, Deserted Wife's Benefit and Allowance and Farm Assist.
- Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, Community Employment, Rural Social Scheme, TÚS, Gateway and Job Initiative, Supplementary Welfare Allowance, Daily Expenses Allowance, Magdalene Commission Scheme.
- On an exceptional basis this year, recipients of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment and equivalent recipients of Jobseeker's Payments who have been on these payments for four months or more.

For more information check www.gov.ie/deasp and www.citizensinformation.ie. Telephone the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection on 071 919 3302 or 1890 800 024 from 9a.m. to 5p.m., Monday to Friday. Telephone the Citizens Information Phone Service on 0761 07 4000, 9a.m. - 8p.m., Monday to Friday. This Fact Sheet is intended as a guide only and does not purport to be a legal interpretation.



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimisce Sóisialaí Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

Maximum Weekly Rate (from week beginning 4 January 2021)	Personal Rate	Increase for a Qualified Adult	Increase for a Qualified Child	Age 12 + over
Social Insurance Payments				
State Pension (Contributory)				
- Personal Rate - Under 80	€248.30		€38	€45
- Personal Rate - Aged 80 and over	€258.30		€38	€45
- Increase for Qualified Adult - Under 66		€165.40		
- Increase for Qualified Adult - 66 and over		€222.50		
Widow's / Widower's / Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension / Deserted Wife's Benefit				
- Under 66	€208.50		€38	€45
- Aged 66 and under 80	€248.30		€38	€45
- Aged 80 and over	€258.30		€38	€45
Invalidity Pension				
- Under 66	€208.50	€148.90	€38	€45
- Aged 66 and over	€220		€38	€45
Carer's Benefit / Constant Attendance Allowance				
- Under 66	€234		€38	€45
- Aged 66 and over	€203	€134.70	€38	€45
Jobseeker's / Illness / Health & Safety / Injury Benefit				
- Under 66	€245			
- Aged 66 and over	€233.50		€38	€45
- Aged 66 and under 80	€252.70		€38	€45
- Aged 80 and over	€262.70		€38	€45
Maximum Weekly Rate (from week beginning 4 January 2021)	Personal Rate	Increase for a Qualified Adult	Increase for a Qualified Child	Age 12 + over
Social Assistance Payments				
State Pension (Non-Contributory)				
- Aged 66 and under 80	€237		€38	€45
- Aged 80 and over	€247		€38	€45
- Increase for Qualified Adult - Under 66		€156.60		
Carer's Allowance - Under 66	€219		€38	€45
- Aged 66 and over	€257		€38	€45
Disability Allowance / Blind Pension	€203	€134.70	€38	€45
Widow's / Widower's / Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension	€203			
- Under 66	€203		€38	€45
- Aged 66 and over	€203	€134.70	€38	€45
One-Parent Family Payment	€203		€38	€45
Jobseeker's Allowance - Aged 26 or over Aged 25	€203	€134.70	€38	€45
- Under 25	€203	€134.70	€38	€45
Supplementary Welfare Allowance	€201	€134.70	€38	€45
- Aged 25	€201	€134.70	€38	€45
- Under 25 living independently with State support	€201	€134.70	€38	€45
- Under 25 not living independently	€112.70	€112.70		
Farm Assist	€203	€134.70	€38	€45

Working Family Payment (formerly Family Income Supplement)	2021 Income Limit
Family Size	
1 Child	€541
2 Children	€642
3 Children	€743
4 Children	€834
5 Children	€960
6 Children	€1,076
7 Children	€1,212
8 Children or more	€1,308
Child Benefit	
Monthly Rate	2021 Rate
	€140 per child
Twins - Child Benefit is paid at one and half times (150%) the normal monthly rate for each child. All other multiple births - Child Benefit is paid at double (200%) the normal monthly rate for each child.	
Other Social Welfare Payments	
Guardian's Payment (Contributory and Non-Con)	2021 Weekly Rate
	€186
Fuel Allowance - Increase from January 2021	€28
Living Alone Allowance	€19
Island Allowance (specified offshore islands)	€20
Other Social Welfare Payments	
Domiciliary Care Allowance	2021 Monthly Rate
	€309.50
Other Social Welfare Payments	
Carer's Support Grant	2021 Annual Rate
	€1,850
Back to School Clothing & Footwear Allowance - each qualified child aged 4-11	€150
Back to School Clothing & Footwear Allowance - each qualified child aged 12 and over	€275
Widowed or Surviving Civil Partner Grant	€8,000
Enhanced Illness Benefit for COVID-19 Absences	
Personal Rate	Increase for a Qualified Adult
	Increase for a Qualified Child
€350	Under 12
	€38
	Aged over 12
	€45
COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP)	
Gross Weekly Earnings prior to claiming PUP	PUP rate from 1 February 2021
Under €300	€203
Over €300	€250