

Update on Payments Awarded for Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment and Enhanced Illness Benefit

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

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398,000 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week

Over €118 million paid out in PUP; Payments to be made to bank accounts tomorrow

Number of people in receipt of Enhanced Illness Benefit grows fourfold in past week to over 6,400

Quickest and easiest way to apply for PUP and Enhanced Illness Benefit is online at www.MyWelfare.ie

This week, the Department of Social Protection has issued weekly payments valued at €118.04 million to 398,206 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

The number of people receiving a PUP payment this week represents an increase of 62,607 (18.7%) on the 335,599 people paid last week.

These figures are in addition to the 189,860 people who were reported on the Live Register as of the end of December.

All Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payments issued will be in recipients' bank accounts or at their post office tomorrow, Tuesday, 12th January.

The sector with the highest number of people receiving PUP this week is Accommodation and Food Service activities (106,387). This is followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (65,300) and Administrative and Support Service Activities (34,459).

The sector that has seen the highest increase in people receiving PUP this week is Wholesale and Retail. Some 65,300 people working in this sector will receive payment tomorrow, compared to 46,853 last week.

This is followed by the Construction sector which has seen an increase in PUP recipients from 23,080 last week compared to 32,151 this week. The number of people in this sector in

receipt of PUP is expected to increase further next week following the imposing of restrictions that took effect last Friday evening.

Speaking today on the latest PUP figures, Minister for Social Protection Heather Humphreys said:

“This week’s figures show that just short of 400,000 are now in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment.

“These statistics outline the stark impact the Covid-19 Pandemic continues to have on the Labour Market.

“The decisions taken by the Government to impose increased restrictions on sectors such as construction, retail and education were not taken lightly.

“But these decisions are necessary in order to protect lives, livelihoods and our frontline workers.

Minister Humphreys continued:

“It is essential that every individual and family follows the health guidelines if we are to suppress the virus. Now more than ever, we need to stay at home as much as possible, limit our contacts, maintain our social distance and wash our hands. The more we comply with the guidelines, the sooner we can begin to re-open the economy.

“PUP remains available to anyone who is eligible. I want to remind people again that the quickest and easiest way to apply is via www.mywelfare.ie.

“I would also strongly advise businesses to consider availing of the Employment Wage Subsidy scheme and the Covid Restrictions Support scheme – administered by Revenue - during the current restrictions. These are designed to protect businesses and seek to maintain the important link between businesses and their employees during these extremely difficult times.”

Self-employed people and PUP

Self-employed people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) who are looking to maintain their business can earn up to €960 over an eight week period, while retaining their full PUP entitlement.

There is no formal application process and a self-employed person simply needs to inform the Department if they earn over €960 in any eight week period.

MyWelfare.ie – New PPSN application service

The easiest and quickest way to apply for many social welfare payments, including the Pandemic Unemployment Payment and Enhanced Illness Benefit, is online at www.MyWelfare.ie. This is a platform which is safe, secure and accessible anytime, anywhere and on all devices. People have the option of applying for Maternity Benefit,

Paternity Benefit, Child Benefit, PRSI refunds and Jobseeker's payments as well as requesting a statement or a record of social insurance contributions from the Department.

A new application service to apply for a PPS number is now available at www.MyWelfare.ie for people living in Ireland who are at least 18 years of age and need a PPS Number to avail of social welfare benefits, public services and information in Ireland. To apply for a PPS Number online, a person will need to have a basic [MyGovID](#) account.

In the interests of the public health advice and observing social distancing people are asked, if possible, not to attend their local Intreo Centre. Instead, they should avail of the online services available through www.MyWelfare.ie.

Control Measures

The Department conducts a series of pre and post payment checks on all PUP claims. Subject to these checks being cleared the Department then processes payments based on the clients' self-declaration.

Subsequently, the Department runs post payment checks that includes verifying data against Revenue records, examining cases where the same Bank account is used multiple times, examining cases where an employer or members of the public report concerns, and the use of data analytics to identify and check claims. We also undertake employer inspections.

This work is undertaken by the Department's Special Investigation Unit, which, for the past six years, includes over 20 Gardaí on secondment to the Department.

Covid-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit Payment

Since last March, some 105,372 people under the age of 66 have been medically certified for receipt of the Covid-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit. Of these, 11.5% have been diagnosed with Covid-19 while the remainder have been required to medically self-isolate.

7,308 of these people were first medically certified last month and of these 1,629 have been certified with having the Covid-19 virus.

The number of people medically certified to receive the Enhanced Illness Benefit has increased in every county since last week with Dublin showing the highest increase of 2,007.

There has also been an increase in the number of people in every sector medically certified to receive Enhanced Illness Benefit.

The two sectors with the highest number of employees medically certified to receive this payment are Wholesale and Retail (22,642) and Human Health and Social Work Activities (18,595).

Today, some 6,412 people are currently in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment – up from 1,661 compared to this day last week. Full details are at Appendices 9, 10 and 11.

The quickest and easiest way to apply for Enhanced Illness Benefit is online via www.MyWelfare.ie.

Minister Humphreys commented:

“The significant increase in the number of people receiving the Enhanced Illness Benefit is another demonstration of the increased presence of the virus in our communities.

“The increase of people in receipt of the Enhanced Illness Benefit certainly coincides with the increase in virus numbers.

“This is further evidence of the need for us all to take the current situation very seriously and adhere to all public health guidance to help suppress the virus.”