

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

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

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**460,000 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week**

**Over €138 million paid out in PUP this week; Payments to be made to bank accounts tomorrow**

**Number of people in receipt of Enhanced Illness Benefit reaches over 10,000**

**5,042 people closed their PUP claims to return to work**

**Quickest and easiest way to apply for PUP and Enhanced Illness Benefit is online at [MyWelfare.ie](#)**

This week, the Department of Social Protection has issued weekly payments valued at €138.07 million to 459,921 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

The number of people receiving a PUP payment this week represents an increase of 61,715 (over 15%) on the 398,206 people paid last week.

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

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

The sector with the highest number of people receiving PUP this week is Accommodation and Food Service activities (110,351). This is followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (73,382) and Construction (56,217).

The sector that has seen the largest increase this week is Construction with 56,217 people receiving a PUP payment tomorrow. This has increased from 32,152 recipients last week which is attributed to the Level 5 restrictions imposed on the sector on the evening of Friday, 9th January.

The Wholesale and Retail sector has seen the number of PUP recipients increase from 65,300 last week to 73,382 this week. This is followed by the Manufacturing sector, which has increased by 6,156 to 25,614 recipients in the last week.

In the past week, some 5,042 people closed their claim for the Pandemic Unemployment Payment stating that they are returning to work.

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

“This week’s Pandemic Unemployment Payment figures are a stark reminder to all of us of the impact that COVID19 is having on so many individuals, families and businesses as well as our communities right across the country. The last time we had this level of claims for PUP was in June 2020 as the country was beginning to emerge from the initial period of restrictions last Summer.

“Since last March over 14 million payments have been issued under the Pandemic Unemployment Payment with over 820,000 people receiving support under the scheme. To put this in context – it is the equivalent of processing over 7 years’ worth of jobseekers applications in 10 months. The total cost of PUP to date is over €5.3 Billion.

“These figures are unprecedented in scale and demonstrate the Government’s absolute commitment to supporting impacted workers at this extremely difficult time. My priority is to ensure that people continue to receive the support they need while these restrictions remain in place and that is why the Pandemic Unemployment Payment remains open for new applications and the current rates of payment will continue until March 31st.

**Minister Humphreys continued:**

“I am encouraged to see that over 5,000 people closed their PUP claims in the past week for return to work purposes.

“It is welcoming to see that even in these times, some people are finding ways to keep businesses going and I would like to acknowledge the efforts that many people are making to seek alternative options and create new ways of continuing their business.

“I would remind these people and others who may be considering something similar of the range of supports available from Government at gov.ie to help support their business during these 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 [MyWelfare.ie](https://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 [MyWelfare.ie](https://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](https://mygovid.ie) 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 [MyWelfare.ie](https://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 113,344 people under the age of 66 have been medically certified for receipt of the Covid-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit.

The number of people medically certified to receive the Enhanced Illness Benefit has increased in every county again this week with Dublin being the highest at 30,923.

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, (24,517) and Human Health and Social Work Activities (19,796).

Today, some 10,484 people are currently in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment – up from 6,412 on this day last week. Full details are at Appendices 9, 10 and 11.

**Minister Humphreys said:**

“I would remind any worker who is displaying symptoms or who are required to self-isolate that the enhanced COVID19 Illness Benefit of €350 is available to them.

“Please avail of this support and do not take the risk of going to work if you are at risk of spreading the virus or infecting others.

“The quickest and easiest way to apply for the Enhanced Illness Benefit is online via [MyWelfare.ie](https://www.mywelfare.ie)”