

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

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

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475,000 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week

€142.8 million paid out in PUP this week; Payments to be made to bank accounts tomorrow

Spend on PUP to date reaches €5.5 billion

Over 9,700 people in receipt of Enhanced Illness Benefit

6,749 people closed their PUP claims in past week to return to work

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

Public are warned about Scam Text Messages

This week, the Department of Social Protection has issued weekly payments valued at €142.86 million to 475,364 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

The number of people receiving a PUP payment this week represents an increase of 15,443 (over 3%) on the 459,921 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, 26th January.

Dublin is the county with the highest number of people who are receiving PUP this week at 147,191. It is followed by Cork with 48,731, and then Galway and Kildare with 25,130 and 21,063 respectively.

The sector with the highest number of people receiving PUP this week is Accommodation and Food Service activities (111,569). This is followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (75,861) and Construction (61,159).

Construction is the sector that has seen the largest increase in the number of people receiving PUP this week, with an additional 4,942 people now receiving the payment when compared to last week.

The Wholesale and Retail sector has seen the number of PUP recipients increase from 73,382 last week to 75,861 this week. This is followed by the Manufacturing sector, which has increased by 1,559 to 27,173 recipients in the last week.

People returning to work

In the past seven days, some 10,000 people closed their PUP claim, with 6,749 of these stating that they were doing so because they are returning to work.

Dublin had the greatest number of people closing their claims (1,717), followed by Cork (721).

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

Even though there are an additional 15,443 people receiving the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week, the scale of the increase has reduced significantly when compared to the previous fortnight.

The PUP continues to provide valuable support to those who have lost employment due to the implementation of necessary public health measures to curb the spread of this dangerous virus.

Protecting the health of everyone living in our State is paramount and as such, it is vital now more than ever, that everyone makes every possible effort to follow the health guidelines.

Minister Humphreys continued:

We owe it to our families, our communities and most of all, to our care workers, nurses, doctors and all who work in our hospitals - often performing additional shifts in order to help out their colleagues in extremely demanding environments.

Their dedication and commitment is to be commended. We owe it to them to remain vigilant and ensure that we are doing our very best to help suppress the virus.

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 available at www.MyWelfare.ie 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.

Scam text Messages

Some members of the public reported to the Department in recent days that they have received text messages on their mobile phones from an unknown number, purporting to be from Revenue. These text messages give a web link that the person is asked to click in order to claim a payment of €350.

The Department wants to ensure that our customers and the public are made aware of this scam activity and that they keep their bank and other financial account information safe.

People are advised not click on or reply to any link which appears to be suspicious. The Department of Social Protection wishes to make it absolutely clear that we never request Bank account or other financial institution account details from our customers via a text message or on social media.

Minister Humphreys commented:

These are sophisticated scams. I urge customers of my Department to be cautious and to ensure that they only use official Departmental websites at all times.

Anyone who thinks they provided personal information in response to these fraudulent text messages should contact their bank immediately.

Covid-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit Payment

Since last March, some 120,892 people under the age of 66 have been medically certified for receipt of the Covid-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit.

With the exception of Waterford, the number of people medically certified to receive the Enhanced Illness Benefit has increased in every county again this week. Dublin is the county with the highest cumulative number at 33,076, followed by Cork (13,060), Galway (7,120) and Kildare (5,307). The number of people in Waterford medically certified to receive the payment this week is 4,179, down from 4,185 last week.

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

The sectors with the highest number of employees medically certified to receive this payment are Wholesale and Retail, (26,228); Human Health and Social Work Activities (20,932); followed by Manufacturing (16,248).

Today, some 9,718 people are currently in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment. Full details are at Appendices 9, 10 and 11.

Minister Humphreys said:

As with the Pandemic Unemployment Payment the quickest and easiest way to apply for the Enhanced Illness Benefit is online via www.MyWelfare.ie. The rate of this payment is €350 and it has been put in place especially for people who have been diagnosed with the Covid-19 virus or who have been told by their doctor to self-isolate.

I would appeal to workers to avail of this support. A person who has been diagnosed or has been told to self-isolate and who chooses to go into work may infect others and are placing the lives of their colleagues at risk.