

# **Update on payments awarded for COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment and Enhanced Illness Benefit**

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

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**Almost 477,700 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week, a decrease of 3,666 on last week**

**€143.3 million paid out in PUP; Payments to be made to bank accounts tomorrow**

**Over 10,000 close their PUP claim to return to work**

**4,700 currently receiving Enhanced Illness Benefit**

**Enhanced Illness Benefit is paid from Day One**

**Quickest and easiest way to apply for PUP, Enhanced Illness Benefit and Jobseekers is online at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie)**

This week, the Department of Social Protection has issued weekly payments valued at €143.34 million to 477,665 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

The number of people receiving a PUP payment this week has decreased by 3,666 compared to last week.

These figures are in addition to the 188,543 people who were on the Live Register at the end of January.

All COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payments issued will be in recipients' bank accounts or at their post office tomorrow, Tuesday 16 February.

Dublin is the county with the highest number of people who are receiving PUP this week at 148,879. It is followed by Cork (48,658) and Galway (25,496).

All sectors with the exception of Electrical/Gas/Water supply sector have fewer people receiving PUP this week than last week, reflecting the number of people who have closed their claims in recent weeks to return to work. The sector with the highest number of people

receiving PUP this week is Accommodation and Food Service activities (111,280), followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (75,927) and Construction (62,197).

Construction is the sector that has seen the largest decrease in the number of people receiving PUP this week, with 705 less people receiving the payment compared to last week.

The Wholesale and Retail sector has seen the number of PUP recipients decrease from 76,606 last week to 75,927 this week. This is followed by the Manufacturing sector, which has seen the number of PUP recipients decrease from 27,732 last week to 27,212 this week.

Some 50% of those receiving PUP are receiving the maximum rate of €350 this week.

### **People returning to work**

The past seven days saw people from every county close their PUP claims as they were returning to work.

Overall, some 12,880 people closed their PUP claims, with 10,201 of these stating that they were doing so because they are returning to work.

Dublin had the greatest number of people closing their claims to return to work (2,526), followed by Cork (1,047) and Kildare (510).

The top three sectors with the largest number of employees closing their Pandemic Unemployment Payment to return to work are Construction (2,167), Wholesale and Retail Trade (1,785), and Manufacturing (1,308).

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

“This week’s figures reflect the first reduction in the number of people receiving the Pandemic Unemployment Payment since the Level 5 restrictions were introduced in late December.

“This is a positive development and shows that the rate of applications for the PUP has levelled off.

“The majority of counties have fewer people on PUP this week than last week and the majority of sectors have also seen a drop in their numbers compared with last week.

“Almost 13,000 people closed their PUP claims in the past seven days with some 10,000 of these stating that they were doing so because they were returning to work.

“This is to be welcomed and it is encouraging for businesses and our economy. The construction sector saw over 2,000 employees close their PUP claims in the past seven days. Furthermore, some 1,700 people in Wholesale and Retail Trade and some 1,300 in Manufacturing closed their claims in order to return to work.”

### **Minister Humphreys continued:**

“I cannot stress strongly enough that people should only be returning to work outside of their own home where it is absolutely essential.

“We cannot become complacent; we must not let our guard down now. We are making these sacrifices for ourselves, our families, our colleagues and our frontline workers.

“The best way we can effectively suppress the virus is to continue to adhere to the public health guidelines and take all necessary precautions.”

**Minister Humphreys also reminded people that financial assistance is available from her department during these difficult times:**

“There are financial supports, which are means assessed, available to people should they need to access them during these difficult times.

“They include assistance with heating costs and rent supplement. Where an individual or a family has a particular financial need they may qualify for a financial support, depending on their household circumstances.”

The details of these supports are available under the department’s Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme and can be viewed on the department’s website [www.gov.ie/dsp](http://www.gov.ie/dsp) or by contacting its Information Help Line 1890 800 024 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

## **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 – PPSN application service**

The easiest and quickest way to apply for many social welfare payments, including the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, Enhanced Illness Benefit and Jobseekers is online at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://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.

The application service to apply for a PPS number is available at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://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](http://www.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](http://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 includes over 20 Gardaí on secondment to the department.

## **COVID-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit Payment**

Today, some 4,707 people are currently in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment, down from 7,149 last week. Full details are at Appendices 9, 10 and 11.

### **Minister Humphreys commented:**

“Again it is encouraging to see the reduction in the numbers of people claiming COVID-19 Illness Benefit. This reflects the efforts that people are making to adhere to the Level 5 restrictions and is paying dividends.

“I would appeal to people who have symptoms not to leave their home to get a medical certificate from their doctor.

“Once they have been diagnosed as having the COVID-19 virus or having to self-isolate by their doctor they can make their application for the Enhanced Illness Benefit online and their doctor will submit the illness certificate online also.

“It is paid from day one of a person's illness or self-isolation and the rate of payment is €350 per week. The quickest and easiest way to apply is through [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie).”