

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

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

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Almost 465,000 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week, a decrease of almost 4,000 on last week

€139.06 million in PUP weekly payments to be paid into bank accounts tomorrow

A further €2 million in PUP arrears to be paid to approximately 6,500 people

2,938 people currently in receipt of Enhanced Illness Benefit

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

This week, the Department of Social Protection has issued weekly payments valued at €139.06 million to 464,860 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

The number of people receiving a Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week has decreased by 3,987 compared to last week.

These figures are in addition to the 186,702 people who were on the Live Register at the end of February.

All Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payments issued will be in recipients' Bank accounts or at their Post Office tomorrow, Tuesday, 9th March.

Tomorrow will also see PUP arrears, totalling almost €2 million, being paid to approximately 6,500 people. This brings the total amount being paid out this week to over €141 million. These arrears are payable to people who are no longer in receipt of PUP and who may not be expecting a payment this week.

Dublin is the county with the highest number of people who are receiving PUP this week at 146,547. It is followed by Cork (47,011) and Galway (24,934).

All sectors with the exception of the 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 (109,754), followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (74,153) and Construction (58,864).

Construction is the sector that has seen the largest decrease in the number of people receiving PUP this week, with 1,003 fewer people receiving the payment compared to last week. The Wholesale and Retail sector has seen the number of PUP recipients decrease from 74,589 last week to 74,153 this week. This is followed by the Manufacturing sector, which has seen the number of PUP recipients decrease from 25,862 last week to 25,488 this week.

Almost 50% of those in receipt of 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 10,857 people closed their PUP claims, with 9,372 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 (2,149), followed by Cork (1,067) and Meath (474).

The top three sectors with the largest number of employees closing their Pandemic Unemployment Payment to return to work are Construction (1,958), Wholesale and Retail Trade (1,210), and Manufacturing (901).

The Department continues to remind workers who are returning to work that they **must close their claim for the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) on the actual date that they start back at work**, in order to ensure that their claim is processed correctly and to avoid incurring an overpayment that the Department will take steps to recover.

The easiest way to close a claim for the Pandemic Unemployment Payment is online via www.MyWelfare.ie. Any worker returning to work with an enquiry about closing their claim, can contact the Department's dedicated Income Support Helpline at 1890 800 024 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

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

“This week again we see a small but steady number of people closing their claim for the Pandemic Unemployment Payment.

“I want to commend the huge efforts being made by people, young and old, which are paying dividends in helping to suppress the Covid-19 virus.

“This virus has remained with us far longer than any of us anticipated. I know people are feeling weary and anxious and just want life to get back to normal.

"But our efforts are making a difference. We are seeing positive signs in terms of hospital numbers and ICU numbers, which are reducing all the time.

“We cannot let our guard down at this time. Employees need to work from home where possible. All of us need to continue to follow the health guidelines and remind ourselves that we are making these sacrifices on behalf of our families, our friends, our communities and our frontline workers.”

Minister Humphreys reminded people that financial assistance is available from her Department for people who need it.

“I want to remind people that my Department provides a range of means assessed financial supports for individuals and families, depending on their particular circumstances.

“Full details of these supports can be viewed on the Department’s website www.gov.ie/dsp or by contacting its Income Support Helpline at 1890 800 024 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.”

Arrears of PUP being paid this week

This week, in addition to the normal weekly Pandemic Unemployment Payments, the Department of Social Protection is paying arrears of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment valued at almost €2 million to approximately 6,500 people.

The payments will be paid directly through the Post Office or into the nominated Bank accounts of these individuals tomorrow, 9th March.

The quickest way for a person wishing to check the details of their arrears payments is via www.MyWelfare.ie.

The vast majority of arrears cases (more than 280,000) were paid last December and some 38,600 received an arrears payment on 23rd February.

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’ payments 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 Jobseekers' 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 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.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 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. It also undertakes employer inspections.

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

As is standard with all social welfare payments, people receiving the Pandemic Unemployment Payment may be asked from time to time to confirm their eligibility to continue to receive their payment. This helps to ensure that people who have, for example, returned to work are reminded to close their claim and avoid incurring an overpayment.

As it did last year the Department has now commenced a process of contacting PUP recipients asking them to confirm their ongoing entitlement.

The Department wishes to make it absolutely clear that it is not requesting bank account or other financial institution details as part of the 'Confirm Eligibility' process.

Recipients are being advised to use the online portal www.MyWelfare.ie and follow the instructions under the heading 'Continue eligibility to receive Pandemic Unemployment Payment'. This is the simplest and easiest way to do so. Any person who experiences difficulty in doing this should contact the helpline 1890 800 024 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm).

Covid-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit Payment

Today, some 2,938 people are in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment, compared with 2,846 last week.

Minister Humphreys commented:

“I am pleased that the overall trend in terms of the number of recipients of Enhanced Illness Benefit is showing a gradual reduction.

“Nevertheless, the slight increase recorded this week is a stark reminder that this virus remains at large and poses a risk to everyone.

“If you are displaying any symptoms of Covid-19, contact your GP immediately and stay at home.

“Enhanced Illness Benefit is paid at €350 per week and applies to the first day of illness.”

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

Full details on Enhanced Illness Benefit including sector and county breakdown as well as age profile are at Appendices 9, 10 and 11.

Ends.