

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

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

Published on 22 March 2021

Last updated on 23 March 2021

449,500 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week, a decrease of 7,000 on last week

€134.23 million in PUP weekly payments to be paid into bank accounts tomorrow

2,134 people currently in receipt of Enhanced Illness Benefit

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

PUP recipients asked to confirm their eligibility by 26 March

This week, the Department of Social Protection has issued weekly payments valued at €134.23 million to 449,521 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

The number of people receiving a Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week has decreased by 7,059 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, 23 March.

Dublin is the county with the highest number of people who are receiving PUP this week at 143,056. It is followed by Cork (45,238) and Galway (24,186).

All sectors with the exception of the Professional, Scientific and Technical activities sector have fewer people receiving PUP this 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 (107,905), followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (72,009) and Construction (55,584).

Construction is the sector that has seen the largest decrease in the number of people receiving PUP this week, with 1,685 fewer people receiving the payment compared to last week. The Wholesale and Retail sector has seen the number of PUP recipients decrease from 73,070 last week to 72,009 this week. This is followed by the Accommodation and Food Service activities sector, which has seen the number of PUP recipients decrease from 108,767 last week to 107,905 this week.

Some 49% of those in receipt of PUP are receiving the maximum rate of €350 this week.

People returning to work

The past seven days saw 9,847 people close their PUP claims, with 8,534 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 (2,105), followed by Cork (888) and Galway (466).

The top three sectors with the largest number of employees closing their Pandemic Unemployment Payment to return to work are Construction (1,781), Wholesale and Retail Trade (1,253), and Accommodation and Food Service activities sector (1,042).

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:

“The Pandemic Unemployment Payment continues to act as a vital income support for almost 450,000 people who lost their job as a result of the pandemic.

“The government will ensure that the PUP remains in place until 30 June and the quickest and easiest way to apply is via MyWelfare.ie.

“I am deeply conscious how difficult these restrictions are for the public.

“People are continuing to make extraordinary sacrifices on behalf of their families, friends, colleagues and frontline workers.

“We have shown before as a country that by adhering to the public health guidelines we can get these virus numbers right back down.”

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.

Confirmation of Eligibility to continue to receive PUP

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.

Similar to last year the department has begun a process of contacting 121,000 PUP recipients asking them to confirm their ongoing entitlement. **The deadline for these people to confirm eligibility is Friday 26 March.**

It is only necessary for those customers who have been asked to confirm their eligibility to do so.

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.

PUP recipients who have been asked to confirm their eligibility are being advised to use the online portal www.MyWelfare.ie and follow the instructions under the heading ‘Continued 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 2,134 people are in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment, compared with 2,472 last week.

Minister Humphreys commented:

“I want to advise people who contract the virus or who are medically certified by their doctor to self-isolate to apply for Enhanced Illness Benefit.

“A person who has symptoms of the COVID-19 virus does not have to leave their home to get a medical certificate from their doctor. They can apply online.

“Unlike the standard Illness Benefit, the Enhanced Illness Benefit is paid from 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.