

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

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

Published on 12 April 2021

Last updated on 13 April 2021

Over 421,000 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week, a decrease of over 15,000 on last week

€125.52 million in PUP weekly payments to be paid into bank accounts tomorrow

2,078 people currently in receipt of Enhanced Illness Benefit

People returning to work should close their claim on their first day back in work by logging on to www.MyWelfare.ie

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

Public warned about Scam Phone callers purporting to be from the Department of Social Protection

This week, the Department of Social Protection has issued weekly payments valued at €125.52 million to 421,373 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

The number of people receiving a Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week has decreased by 15,776 compared to last week.

The figures published today are in addition to the 183,096 people who were on the Live Register at the end of March.

All COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payments issued will be in recipients' bank accounts or at their Post Office tomorrow, Tuesday 13 April.

Dublin is the county with the highest number of people who are receiving PUP this week at 134,417. It is followed by Cork (42,391) and Galway (22,774).

All sectors 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 (102,405), followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (67,990) and Construction (50,169).

Accommodation and Food Service activities is the sector that has seen the largest decrease in the number of people receiving PUP this week with 3,753 fewer people receiving the payment compared to last week. The Construction sector has seen the number of PUP recipients decrease from 52,723 last week to 50,169 this week. This is followed by the Wholesale and Retail sector which has seen the number of PUP recipients decrease from 70,083 last week to 67,990 this week.

Some 48% of those in receipt of PUP are receiving the maximum rate of €350 this week.

People returning to work

The past seven days saw 7,327 people close their PUP claims, with 5,966 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 (1,478), followed by Cork (672) and Kildare (311).

The sectors with the largest number of employees closing their Pandemic Unemployment Payment claims to return to work are Construction (1,501), Wholesale and Retail Trade (970), and Accommodation and Food Service activities sector (723). Some 654 people closed their claims to return to work in the Manufacturing sector while 119 closed their claims as they return to work in the Education sector.

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:

“As we begin a limited phased easing of restrictions from today, we see that more people have closed their Pandemic Unemployment Payment claim in the past week to return to work.

“With sectors such as construction and our schools re-opening, it is vital that we take a cautious approach until a substantial level of our population has been vaccinated, at which point we will move to reopen our society more widely.

“I appreciate that the restrictions currently have a huge impact on the social and economic wellbeing of our communities. However, the vaccination programme will give us a pathway to a return to economic and social activity.

“Finally, I would like to remind anyone receiving the Pandemic Unemployment Payment who is returning to work that they must close their claim for the payment on the actual day that they start back at work.”

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.

Scam Phone Calls

Minister Humphreys warned customers and members of the public about scam phone calls they may receive from individuals purporting to be an official of the department. The call displays a range of numbers one of which is the department's helpline number 1890 800 024.

The department is currently not engaged in contacting customers or members of the public through this number.

Minister Humphreys advised:

“Please do not engage with these calls or share any personal information with the callers in question.

“It’s important to stress that Department of Social Protection staff will never ask you for your Personal Public Services Number (PPSN) or bank details if they should have reason to call you over the phone.”

Any person who receives such a call from this number is asked to report it to the Gardaí immediately.

Control Measures

The department conducts a series of pre and post payment checks on all PUP claims which include continuing eligibility checks. Subject to these checks being cleared the department then processes payments based on the clients’ self-declaration.

As a result of the most recent eligibility check, there are a number of people who failed to confirm their eligibility to continue to receive PUP and are now no longer in payment. These people have been individually informed of this by the department.

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.

COVID-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit Payment

Today, some 2,078 people are in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment, compared with 2,061 last week.

Employees or self-employed people who contract the virus or who are medically certified by their doctor to self-isolate are advised to apply for Enhanced Illness Benefit. 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.