

Update on Payments Awarded for Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment and Enhanced Illness Benefit – 20 April 2021

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

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Almost 421,000 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week

€125.4 million in PUP weekly payments to be paid into bank accounts today

Over 90,000 receive an arrears payment

1,689 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

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 €125.4 million to 420,773 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

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

Separately, some 90,346 people will receive an arrears payment of PUP today that in total amounts to over €49 million.

Approximately 30,000 of these are no longer in receipt PUP and the arrears payments will be issuing to the nominated financial institutions today. Accordingly, any person expecting an arrears payment should check their Bank account or check with their Post Office where they had been collecting their weekly payment.

All Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payments issued will be in recipients' bank accounts or at their Post Office today, Tuesday, 20th April.

Dublin is the county with the highest number of people who are receiving PUP this week at 135,295. It is followed by Cork (42,003) and Galway (22,733).

The sector with the highest number of people receiving PUP this week is Accommodation and Food Service activities (103,271), followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (67,832) and Construction (48,933).

The Construction sector has seen the largest decrease in the number of people receiving PUP this week with 1,236 fewer people receiving the payment compared to last week.

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

People returning to work

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 past seven days saw 18,827 people close their PUP claims, with 16,793 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 (3,800), followed by Cork (2,102) and Galway (901) and Meath (901).

The sectors with the largest number of employees closing their Pandemic Unemployment Payment claims to return to work are Construction (6,173), Wholesale and Retail Trade (1,737), and Accommodation and Food Service activities sector (1,489). Some 1,445 people closed their claims to return to work in the Manufacturing sector while 755 closed their claims as they return to work in the Education sector.

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 efforts of the Irish people in suppressing this virus are having a really positive impact.

“We are again this week seeing a welcome reduction in Covid-19 cases, in hospitalisations and in ICU admissions.

“If we continue to make this kind of progress, we will then be well-placed to consider a further easing of restrictions into May and June. These decisions will be considered closely by Cabinet next week.”

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.

Scam Phone Calls and Scam Texts

Customers and members of the public are reminded about scam phone calls and scam text messages they may receive from individuals purporting to be an official of the Department. These calls and texts display a range of numbers.

Any person who receives such a call or text 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.

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 1,689 people are in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment, compared with 2,078 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.