

Update on payments awarded for COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment and Enhanced Illness Benefit - 4 May 2021

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

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Over 385,000 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week, a decrease of almost 18,000 on last week

Numbers fall below 400,000 for first time this year

€114.1 million in PUP weekly payments to be paid into bank accounts today

Over €7.4 billion in total paid under PUP to date

Over 12,600 close their PUP account to return to work

1,642 people currently in receipt of Enhanced Illness Benefit

As Level 5 Restrictions begin to ease, people returning to work should close their claim on their first day back in work by logging on to www.MyWelfare.ie

Public reminded about Scam Phone Calls and Scam Texts from callers claiming to be from the Department of Social Protection

This week, the Department of Social Protection has issued weekly payments valued at €114.1 million to 385,211 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.

All COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payments issued will be in recipients' bank accounts or at their Post Office today, Tuesday 4 May.

Dublin is the county with the highest number of people who are receiving PUP this week at 125,105. It is followed by Cork (37,980) and Galway (20,987).

The sector with the highest number of people receiving PUP this week is Accommodation and Food Service activities (99,140), followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (63,361) and Construction (37,437).

The Construction sector has seen the largest decrease in the number of people receiving PUP this week with 4,896 fewer people receiving the payment compared to last week.

People returning to work

As the country begins to move out of Level 5 restrictions, 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 12,692 people close their PUP claim 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 (3,776), followed by Cork (1,233) and Kildare (684).

The sectors with the largest number of employees closing their Pandemic Unemployment Payment claims to return to work are Construction (3,729), Wholesale and Retail Trade (1,794), and Accommodation and Food Service activities sector (1,418). Some 1,184 people closed their claims to return to work in the Administrative and Support service Activities 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:

“For the first time this year, the number of people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment has fallen below the 400,000 mark.

“This is a very positive development and reflects the start of the recovery phase from this pandemic.

“As restrictions are eased further over the coming weeks, tens of thousands more people will be in a position to close their PUP claims as their industries re-open and they return to work.

“For people who are not yet in a position to return to work, the PUP will continue to be paid at its current rates and will remain open to new entrants until 30 June.

“At the end of May, we will set out the future of PUP post 30 June taking account of the trajectory of the virus, progress on the vaccine roll out and the continued impact of the pandemic on the economy over the months ahead.

“The government recognises that some sectors will be slower to reopen than others.

“For that reason, there will be no cliff-edge come the end of June. Supports will not be suddenly withdrawn but will be phased out in a gradual way in line with the reopening of the economy.”

The Minister added:

“There is now great momentum behind our national vaccination programme with those aged 59 being encouraged to register via the HSE’s online portal from today.

“The progress that we have made in recent times means more of the freedoms that we lost due to the pandemic will be restored from next week.

“We can now look forward to the summer of 2021 with optimism, while still maintaining a sense of caution as we continue our efforts to suppress this virus.”

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) 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 and Scam Texts

Customers and members of the public are reminded about scam phone calls and scam text messages they may receive from individuals claiming 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 not to disclose any information and 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 1,642 people are in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment, compared with 1,653 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.