Almost 480,000 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week

€144.1 million paid out in PUP; Payments to be made to bank accounts tomorrow

Over 23,000 people closed their PUP claims in January as they returned to work

Number of people in receipt of Enhanced Illness Benefit falls to 7,520

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 €144.11 million to 479,633 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

The number of people receiving a PUP payment this week represents an increase of 4,269 (less than 1%) on the 475,364 people paid last week.

These figures are in addition to the 189,860 people who were on the Live Register at the end of December.

All COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payments issued will be in recipients’ bank accounts or at their post office tomorrow, Tuesday 2 February.

Dublin is the county with the highest number of people who are receiving PUP this week at 148,617. It is followed by Cork with 49,184, and then Galway with 25,452.

Counties Carlow, Limerick, Longford, Louth, Waterford and Westmeath have fewer numbers of people receiving PUP this week than last week.
The sector with the highest number of people receiving PUP this week is Accommodation and Food Service activities (111,809). This is followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (76,367) and Construction (62,534).

Construction is the sector that has seen the largest increase in the number of people receiving PUP this week, with an additional 1,375 people now receiving the payment compared to last week.

The Wholesale and Retail sector has seen the number of PUP recipients increase from 76,367, compared to 75,861 last week.

This is followed by the Manufacturing sector, which has seen the number of PUP recipients increased from 27,173 to 27,577.

Some 50% of those receiving PUP are on the maximum rate of €350 per week.

**People returning to work**

The past seven days saw people from every county close their PUP claims to return to work.

Overall, some 10,606 people closed their PUP claim, with 7,330 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 (1,889), followed by Cork (835) and Kildare (361).

Since the beginning of January this year, some 23,127 people have closed their PUP claim to return to work.

The top three sectors from which employees closed their Pandemic Unemployment Payment to return to work are Construction (1,468), Wholesale and Retail Trade (1,377), and Manufacturing (889).

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

"The rate of new claims for the Pandemic Unemployment Payment has decreased again this week. This demonstrates that the overall PUP numbers are starting to plateau again.

"I am pleased to see that despite the Level 5 restrictions, over 23,000 people closed their PUP claims in January as they returned to work.

"While all of these are positive signs, the worst possible thing we could do right now is drop our guard.

"By working together and adhering to the public health advice, we can drive the virus numbers down much further throughout the month of February."
"I can assure people that the supports under the Department of Social Protection, such as the PUP and Enhanced Illness Benefit, will continue to be made available to people impacted by the pandemic.

"The quickest and easiest way to apply is via www.mywelfare.ie."

**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 is online at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://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 jobseeker’s 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](http://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 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](http://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. We also undertake 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**
Since last March, some 126,295 people under the age of 66 have been medically certified for receipt of the COVID-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit.

The number of people medically certified to receive the Enhanced Illness Benefit has increased in every county this week. Dublin is the county with the highest cumulative number at 34,549, followed by Cork (13,644) and Galway (7,408).

There has also been an increase in the number of people in every sector medically certified to receive Enhanced Illness Benefit.

The sectors with the highest number of employees medically certified to receive this payment are Wholesale and Retail, (27,457); Human Health and Social Work Activities (21,765); followed by Manufacturing (16,861).

Today, some 7,520 people are currently in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment, down from 9,718 last week. Full details are at Appendices 9, 10 and 11.

**Minister Humphreys added:**

"I would like to remind people that where they are required by their medical doctor to self-isolate they should apply for the Enhancement Illness Benefit. The rate of payment is €350 per week and the quickest and easiest way to apply is online via www.MyWelfare.ie.

"A person who has been told to self-isolate should not go into work, shopping or travel on public transport as they are placing the lives and health of others at risk.”