

Pandemic Unemployment Payment to remain open for new entrants

From [Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection](#)

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Minister: Applications for PUP may now be made until the end of 2020

Waiver on waiting days for jobseeker payments also extended

Department issues reminder of upcoming changes to payment rates

The Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys, T.D., has today secured Government approval to keep the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) open to new applicants until the end of 2020.

To date, over €3.5 billion has been paid out under PUP to hundreds of thousands of people who lost their jobs as a result of the Pandemic.

As part of the July Jobs Stimulus, a decision was taken to close PUP for new entrants from September 17th.

However, Minister Humphreys today secured Cabinet approval to extend this date until the end of 2020.

This means that anyone who loses their employment as a result of the pandemic after September 17th will be able to avail of the appropriate PUP rate.

It also means that anyone unfortunate enough to be laid off for a second time will be able to avail of PUP.

Commenting on the extension, Minister Humphreys said:

“The PUP has been shown to be an extremely effective tool in responding to the economic impact of Covid-19 and in cushioning the population from sudden income shocks.

“The Government has agreed to my proposal to keep the scheme open to new applicants until the end of the year.

“With the continuing uncertainty posed by Covid-19, I believe keeping PUP open is a fair and appropriate course of action at this time.”

Extension of the waiver on waiting days for jobseeker payments

Minister Humphreys has also secured Government approval to extend the waiver on waiting days for Jobseeker payments until 2021.

Ordinarily, when a person makes an application for a jobseeker's benefit or allowance, payment is not made for the first three days of unemployment, called 'waiting days'. These waiting days will continue to be waived on applications for Jobseeker's payments until 2021.

Minister Humphreys said:

“The extension of the waiver on waiting days for jobseeker's payments ensures that people who lose their employment and claim a jobseeker's payment are provided with income support immediately. I am happy to secure this important measure to mitigate the financial impact on people and their families at this time.”

Changes to Payment Rates

As was announced as part of the July Jobs Stimulus package the Pandemic Unemployment Payment rates will change on the 17th September 2020, 1st February 2021 and on 1st April 2021.

From 17th September 2020 the Pandemic Unemployment Payment will move from 2 rates of payment to 3 rates.

The rate a recipient will receive will depend on the amount they previously earned:

- If they earned over €300 per week - they will now receive €300 per week.
- If they earned between €200 and €300 per week - the rate of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment will now be €250 per week; and
- If they earned less than €200 per week - the rate of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment will be €203 per week (there is no change to this rate).

Recipients of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment will see the impact of these changes in their bank accounts on Tuesday, September 22nd.

Individuals do not need to contact the Department about their earnings. The Department has access to this information from the Revenue Commissioners and will be contacting PUP recipients in advance of these changes informing them of their new rate of payment.

Reversion of Qualified Adult rates

People receiving jobseeker and illness benefit payments who have an adult dependent may qualify for an increase in their payment, known as an Increase for a Qualified Adult (IQA). On April 3rd, the Qualified Adult payment for a person on an illness benefit or jobseeker payment was increased temporarily from €134.70 to €147.00.

The weekly rate of this allowance is reverting from €147 to €134.70 later this month and will bring the payment back in line with other schemes generally payable to people of working age. The rate of the Increase for a Qualified Adult was increased temporarily in March to

align the jobseeker payment for a two-person household with the PUP rate which was €350. As PUP will no longer be paid at the €350 rate after September 17th, these rates are reverting to their usual level.

The Department of Social Protection will contact the people affected to advise them of this change.

ENDS

Note for Editors

This week, the Department of Social Protection issued payments valued at €65.5 million to 209,941 people for the PUP. This represents a drop of over 64% on the 598,000 people paid at the peak on 5 May.