

Update on Payments Awarded for Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment and Enhanced Illness Benefit

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

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348,300 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week

€102.67 million paid out in PUP weekly payments

A further €83.14 million paid in Christmas Bonus to PUP recipients

Over 28,000 closed their PUP claims in past 7 days

People returning to work should close their claim on their start date by logging on to www.MyWelfare.ie

This week, the Department of Social Protection has issued weekly payments valued at €102.67 million, down from €103.65 million last week, to 348,256 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

The number of people receiving a PUP payment this week represents a decrease of 3,168 on the 351,424 people paid last week.

The sector with the highest number of people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment is Accommodation and Food Service Activities (101,335) followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (55,173) and Other Sectors e.g. hairdressers and beauty salons (31,008).

These figures are in addition to the 194,058 people who were reported on the Live Register as of the end of November. All Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payments issued will be in recipients' bank accounts or at their post office tomorrow, Tuesday, 8th December.

People returning to work

In the past seven days, some 28,682 people closed their PUP claim, with 25,350 stating that they were doing so because they are returning to work. It is expected that many more people will return to work in the coming week. Almost two thirds of these are female (16,876).

The top sectors from which employees closed their Pandemic Unemployment Payment to return to work are Wholesale and Retail Trade (7,298), Other Sectors e.g. hairdressers and

beauty salons (6,635), Accommodation and Food Service Activities (3,968), and Administrative and Support Service Activities (1,077).

Dublin had the greatest number of people closing their claims (6,441), followed by Cork (3,265), Galway (1,458), Kildare (1,244) and Wexford (1,019).

Christmas Bonus Payment

Also, this week, just over 283,000 PUP recipients will receive the Christmas Bonus payment totalling €83.14 million.

The Christmas Bonus payment (an extra week's payment) is normally made to people who are in receipt of long-term social welfare payments and who are entitled to a normal payment in respect of the week that the bonus is paid.

People who are unemployed for less than 12 months do not normally receive this payment.

This year, as an exceptional measure, the Government decided that the bonus payment should be made to people in receipt of PUP or a jobseeker's payment for at least 4 months (17 weeks).

In the case of PUP recipients any person, who has received 17 weeks of PUP payments in the period since March (not necessarily continuously) **and** is due a payment in respect of the week of 27th November to 3rd December will receive their normal PUP payment plus a bonus week payment tomorrow, 8th December.

Recipients of other social welfare payments who are receiving a long-term weekly payment will receive the Christmas Bonus also this week. It will be paid to them on the same day that they receive their weekly payment. Overall, the Christmas Bonus will be paid to over 1.6 million recipients with payments totalling €390 million.

Commenting today, Social Protection Minister Humphreys said:

“Over 28,000 people closed their Pandemic Unemployment Payment claims over the past seven days as we exited Level 5 of restrictions.

“It is reassuring to see businesses re-opening again in sectors that have been really badly hit by the Pandemic: The likes of retail, accommodation, food services and beauty salons.

Christmas is a really important time of year for these sectors and I want to commend businesses for their efforts in re-opening in a safe manner.”

Minister Humphreys added:

“This week, the Christmas Bonus will be paid to over 1.6 million social welfare recipients with payments totalling €390 million. This includes €83 million that is being paid to people receiving PUP payments alone.

“In total, over a half a billion euro has been paid out by the Department in the form of the Christmas bonus and PUP arrears.

“I am again encouraging people to spend this money locally. That way, you are helping your local economy and supporting small businesses.”

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.

Minister Humphreys commented:

“I want to re-assure workers that PUP remains open until March and any worker who returns to work only to find that their employer closes again in the New Year will be able to avail of the payment.

“I encourage all workers who have the opportunity to do so to return to work - just as we needed your support to suppress the virus we now need it to re-open our economy.”

Any employer who has difficulty re-hiring staff can contact the Department at c19employerreports@welfare.ie or employer@welfare.ie.

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.

This week, the largest cohort of people who closed their claims to return to work is in the 35-44 age group (6,066), followed by those aged 25-34 (6,034). Full details are available at Appendix 8.

MyWelfare.ie – New PPSN application service

To apply for many social welfare payments including the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, the easiest and quickest way is to do so 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 Jobseeker’s payments as well as requesting a statement or a record of social insurance contributions from the Department.

A new application service to apply for a PPS number is now 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.

Covid-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit Payment

Since March, a cumulative total of 92,629 people under the age of 66 have been medically certified for receipt of the Covid-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit.

Today, some 1,855 people are currently in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment. Full details are at Appendices 9, 10 and 11.