

# Update on payments awarded for COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment and Enhanced Illness Benefit

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

Published on 1 March 2021

Last updated on 1 March 2021

**Almost 469,000 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week, a decrease of 4,500 on last week**

**€140.34 million in PUP weekly payments to be paid into bank accounts tomorrow**

**Number of people currently in receipt of Enhanced Illness Benefit now under 3,000**

**Quickest and easiest way to apply for PUP, Enhanced Illness Benefit and Jobseekers is online at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie)**

This week, the Department of Social Protection has issued weekly payments valued at €140.34 million to 468,847 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

The number of people receiving a PUP payment this week has decreased by 4,566 compared to last week.

These figures are in addition to the 188,543 people who were on the Live Register at the end of January.

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

Dublin is the county with the highest number of people who are receiving PUP this week at 147,241. It is followed by Cork (47,535) and Galway (25,082).

All sectors with the exception of the Electrical/Gas/Water supply sector have fewer people receiving PUP this week than last week, reflecting the number of people who have closed their claims in recent weeks to return to work.

The sector with the highest number of people receiving PUP this week is Accommodation and Food Service activities (110,216), followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (74,589) and Construction (59,867).

Construction is the sector that has seen the largest decrease in the number of people receiving PUP this week, with 1,210 fewer people receiving the payment compared to last week. The Manufacturing sector has seen the number of PUP recipients decrease from 26,618 last week to 25,862 this week. This is followed by Wholesale and Retail sector, which has seen the number of PUP recipients decrease from 75,196 last week to 74,589 this week.

Almost 50% of those in receipt of PUP are receiving the maximum rate of €350 this week.

### **People returning to work**

The past seven days saw people from every county close their PUP claims as they were returning to work.

Overall, some 10,482 people closed their PUP claims, with 9,078 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 (2,372), followed by Cork (992) and Kildare (493).

The top three sectors with the largest number of employees closing their Pandemic Unemployment Payment to return to work are Construction (2,078), Wholesale and Retail Trade (1,295), and Manufacturing (1,015).

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. claim, can contact the department's dedicated Income Support Helpline at 1890 800 024 between 9am and 5pm

The easiest way to close a claim for the Pandemic Unemployment Payment is online via [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie). Any worker returning to work with an enquiry about closing their Monday to Friday.

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

“The number of people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment has decreased for a third consecutive week.

“This reflects the fact that activity is continuing in essential industries. But it also reflects the ability of employers to find innovative ways to operate within the public health guidelines including through the use of remote working and online service delivery.

“It is really important that where possible, employees are facilitated in terms of working from home.

“I want to commend employers for their efforts in facilitating remote working to date and I am encouraging them to maintain these arrangements, where possible, while Level 5 restrictions remain in place.”

### **Minister Humphreys reminded people that financial assistance is available from her department for people who need it:**

“In addition to the Pandemic Unemployment Payment and Enterprise Support Grant, my department has a range of means-assessed financial supports available to individuals and families.

“These include assistance with heating costs and rent supplement through our Supplementary Welfare Allowance.”

In addition, the protocol between Tusla and the department to make Rent Supplement available to victims of domestic violence has been extended until the end of 2021:

“I want to reassure people in domestic violence situations that these arrangements are in place for any individual or family on referral from Tusla or a Tusla funded service provider to my department.”

Details of these supports can be viewed on the department’s website [www.gov.ie/dsp](http://www.gov.ie/dsp) or by contacting its Income Support Helpline at 1890 800 024 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

### **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](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. 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.

As is standard with all social welfare payments, people receiving the Pandemic Unemployment Payment may be asked from time to time to confirm their eligibility to continue to receive their payment. This helps to ensure that people who have, for example, returned to work are reminded to close their claim and avoid incurring an overpayment. As it did last year the department will in the coming weeks commence a process of contacting PUP recipients asking them to confirm their ongoing entitlement.

The department wishes to make it absolutely clear that it is not requesting bank account or other financial institution details as part of the 'Confirm Eligibility' process.

Recipients will be advised to use the online portal [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie) and follow the instructions under the heading 'Continue eligibility to receive Pandemic Unemployment Payment'. This is the simplest and easiest way to do so. Any person who experiences difficulty in doing this should contact the helpline 1890 800 024 (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.)

### **COVID-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit Payment**

Today, some 2,846 people are in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment, compared with 3,999 last week.

#### **Minister Humphreys commented:**

“The number of people receiving the weekly Enhanced Illness Benefit payment has reduced steadily over the past six weeks, reflecting the progress being made in containing the virus and the efforts being made by so many individuals and families in adhering to the health guidelines.

“Thanks to these efforts and sacrifices we can look forward to better times ahead.

“I also want to reassure people that the Enhanced Illness Benefit remains in place for anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 or who has been required to self-isolate by their medical doctor.

“The rate of payment is €350 a week and it is paid from day one of a person’s illness or self-isolation. The quickest and easiest way to apply is through 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.