

# **Update on payments awarded for COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment and Enhanced Illness Benefit - 11 May 2021**

From [Department of Social Protection](#)

Published on 11 May 2021

Last updated on 11 May 2021

**Over 376,600 receive the Pandemic Unemployment Payment this week, a decrease of over 8,500 on last week**

**€111.5 million in PUP weekly payments to be paid into bank accounts today**

**Over 12,000 close their PUP account to return to work**

**1,564 people currently in receipt of Enhanced Illness Benefit**

**As 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](http://www.MyWelfare.ie)**

**Employers who experience difficulties in re-hiring staff can notify the department at [C19employerreports@welfare.ie](mailto:C19employerreports@welfare.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 €111.5 million to 376,665 people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP).

This represents a decrease of 8,546 people compared to last week.

The figures published today are in addition to the 177,969 people who were on the Live Register at the end of April.

All COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payments issued will be in recipients' bank accounts or at their Post Office today, Tuesday 11 May.

Dublin is the county with the highest number of people who are receiving PUP this week at 122,775. It is followed by Cork (37,118) and Galway (20,567).

The sector with the highest number of people receiving PUP this week is Accommodation and Food Service activities (98,124), followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade (62,115) and Construction (34,663).

The Construction sector has seen the largest decrease in the number of people receiving PUP this week with 2,774 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 12,245 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 (3,300), followed by Cork (1,269) and Kildare (661).

The sectors with the largest number of employees closing their Pandemic Unemployment Payment claims to return to work are Construction (3,107), Wholesale and Retail Trade (2,295), and Accommodation and Food Service activities sector (1,422). Some 969 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](http://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:**

“This week, the country took a big step forward in terms of reopening our economy and society.

“The decision to ease restrictions was only possible due to the hard work and determination shown by the Irish people.

“The reopening of sectors of our economy is resulting in more people going back to work.

“There are 8,500 fewer people receiving a Pandemic Unemployment Payment today and that number is expected to fall further in the coming weeks, as industries like retail and hospitality reopen.

“In situations where it is not be possible for other businesses to reopen for a while, I want to reassure those employers and employees that the government supports will remain available to them until 30 June.

“In the coming weeks, the government will make decisions on how these financial supports will operate as we continue through the recovery phase of this pandemic.

“But let me be very clear, there will be no cliff-edge when we reach the end of June. The government will adopt a cautious and phased approach, recognising the fact that some sectors will be slower to reopen than others.”

### **The Minister continued:**

“Huge progress is being made in relation to the rollout of the national vaccination programme.

“Without doubt, this progress gives us all cause for hope and optimism in relation to the weeks and months ahead.

“But we must maintain a sense of caution. We need to continue to adhere to the public health guidelines and act sensibly in order to suppress this virus even further.”

### **Control Measures/Re-hiring Workers**

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.

As the industry reopens the department’s inspectors will be conducting control reviews and matching records against employer payroll data from the Revenue Commissioners to help ensure people close their claim as they return to work. To avoid incurring an overpayment people returning to work should close their claim and can do so easily at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie).

The department notes the concerns expressed in recent days regarding employers facing difficulties in re-hiring staff. Experience from 2020 showed that about 400,000 people closed their PUP claim once the economy partially reopened. This is clear evidence that the vast majority of people want to, and will take up employment, once it is available to them.

However, any employer who faces difficulties in re-hiring staff can notify the department at [C19employerreports@welfare.ie](mailto:C19employerreports@welfare.ie) and we will follow-up with the workers concerned.

### **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 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](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](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](http://www.MyWelfare.ie).

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

Today, some 1,564 people are in receipt of an Enhanced Illness Benefit payment, compared with 1,642 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](http://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.

### **Scam Phone Calls and Scam Texts**

Customers and members of the public are reminded about scam phone calls and text messages they may receive from individuals claiming to be an official of the department. These calls and texts display a range of numbers, including some which may appear to be from the department's phone numbers. The department would like to remind all its customers that it will never seek personal information from customers via text message and will never ask a customer for their bank details over the phone.

Any person who receives such a call or text is asked not to disclose any information and to report it to the Gardaí immediately.