

# **Supports and Entitlements for Carers**



## Introduction

The information in this booklet has been compiled by the North Leinster Citizens Information Service.

The information contained within this publication is intended as a guide only. Every reasonable precaution has been taken to ensure accuracy at the time of going to print. For the most up to date information, please call into a Citizens Information Centre or visit our website, [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie).

## Louth Offices

### **Dundalk Citizens Information Centre**

3 – 6 Adelphi Plaza

Dundalk

Co. Louth

Tel: No 0761 07 5950

### **Drogheda Citizens Information Centre**

86 West Street

Drogheda

Co. Louth

Tel: No 0761 07 5940

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Programme.**

**Logo to go here**

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Information Board.

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## Payments for Carers

Carers may be entitled to a number of supports from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. If you are caring for someone, a disabled child or adult or an older person, you may qualify for a carer's payment. The two main social welfare payments for carer's providing full-time care are Carer's Allowance and Carer's Benefit. You may also qualify for an annual Carer's Support Grant.

If you do not qualify for Carer's Benefit or Carers Allowance but you are caring for someone full time you may qualify for the Carers Support Grant. This grant is paid once a year in June.

**Please Note** there is no qualified adult payment on any of the carer's payments.

When applying for any of the carer's payments, it is important that you give as much details of the care that you are giving to the person as possible. For example you might have a daily diary showing the amount of care that this person requires from early in the morning to late in the evening.

Also when sending in the application form send in as much supporting documentation as possible e.g. Medical evidence, hospital appointments, treatments, operation waiting lists etc.

If you are refused a carer's payment you always have an option of appealing the decision, as the Department will always inform you why you have been refused. The more information you include, the better your chances.

## Carer's Leave

The Carer's Leave Act 2001 allows employees to leave their employment temporarily to provide full-time care for someone in need of full-time care and attention. You are entitled to take carer's leave of at least 13 weeks up to a maximum of 104 weeks. If you ask to take less than 13 weeks' carer's leave, your employer may refuse your request.

Carer's leave from employment is unpaid but the Carer's Leave Act ensures that people who want to take carer's leave will have their jobs kept open for them while they are on carer's leave. You may be eligible for Carer's Benefit if you have enough PRSI contributions. If you do not qualify for Carer's Benefit you may qualify for Carer's Allowance which is a means-tested payment. You can take carer's leave even if you do not qualify for these payments.

## Rules

To get carer's leave you must have worked for your employer for a continuous period of 12 months.

The person you will be caring for, must be deemed to be in need of full-time care and attention by a Deciding Officer of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). The Department makes their decision after reviewing information from the family doctor (GP) of the person you will be caring for. The person you will be caring for must be so disabled that they need: Continuous supervision and frequent assistance throughout the day in connection with their normal personal needs for example, help to eat, drink, wash or dress, or

Continuous supervision in order to avoid being a danger to themselves

The person you will be caring for does not have to be a family member or spouse, but can be a friend or colleague.

### **Taking carer's leave**

You can apply to take carer's leave in one continuous period of 104 weeks or for a number of periods not exceeding a total of 104 weeks. If you do not take carer's leave in one continuous period, there must be a gap of at least 6 weeks between each period of carer's leave. You must give your employer at least 6 weeks' notice of your intention to take carer's leave - see 'How to apply' below.

The minimum statutory entitlement to carer's leave is 13 weeks. If you apply for a period of carer's leave which is less than 13 weeks', your employer can refuse (on reasonable grounds). If your employer refuses this leave, they must explain in writing why they are refusing you this leave.

However, you and your employer may agree arrangements for carer's leave which are more favourable to you.

You can only be on carer's leave for one person in need of full-time care at any one time. However, if 2 people live together and are both in need of full-time care and attention, you can get carer's leave for both of them.

In this situation the total amount of carer's leave is 208 weeks (104 for each person being cared for).

If your carer's leave to care for someone has finished, you cannot commence another period of carer's leave to care for a different person until a period of 6 months has elapsed since the termination of the previous period of carer's leave.

### **Confirmation of carer's leave from employment**

If you get carer's leave, you and your employer must prepare and sign a document confirming this arrangement at least 2 weeks before you begin your carer's leave. The document must include some important information, for example, the date when you wish to start your carer's leave, the duration of your carer's leave, and the form in which your leave will be taken. Your employer retains this document and must give you a copy of it.

### **Working while on carer's leave**

You can work for up to 15 hours a week while you are on carer's leave provided your income from employment or self-employment is less than a weekly income limit of €332.50. (After deductions, this is your take-home pay). The income limit is set by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Alternatively you can attend an educational or training course or take up voluntary work for a maximum of 15 hours a week.

Before you start work or training you should tell the Carer's Benefit section. During your absence, the person you are caring for must be adequately cared for.

## **Your social insurance (PRSI) record**

If you are getting Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance, you will get credited social insurance contributions or credits. If you are on carer's leave but do not get Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance, you are still entitled to get credits. You should get your employer to complete the application form for carer's leave credits (pdf). This will ensure that your existing cover for social welfare is fully maintained.

## **Postponing, curtailing or terminating your carer's leave**

The document you agree and sign with your employer confirming you will be taking carer's leave is flexible. This means that your arrangement to take carer's leave can be amended. Even if your leave from employment has already commenced, your carer's leave (or part of it) can be postponed, curtailed or changed, if you and your employer agree to it. Then your confirmation of carer's leave agreement can be amended and signed again. Your employer should keep the original copy of the amended agreement and you must be given a copy of this amendment for your own records.



**Carer's leave can be terminated in certain circumstances - see below:**

- Where the person being cared for no longer needs full-time care and attention
- Where the employee is no longer in a position to provide full-time care and attention
- Where the person being cared for dies. In these circumstances, the carer's leave will end 6 weeks after the death or on the date specified in the confirmation document – whichever is earlier
- Where an employer is of the opinion that the employee, or the person receiving the care, no longer meets the conditions for carer's leave. In such a situation, the employer may refer the matter to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection for a decision
- At a date agreed between the employer and the employee.

Following the ending of the carer's leave, the employer must give notice of this fact (including the date of return) in writing to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

**Returning to work**

If you are on carer's leave, you must give your employer written notice of your intention to return to work. This notice must be given 4 weeks before you will return to work.

**Employment rights**

You are not entitled to pay while on carer's leave, but in general you will be treated as if you are in work during carer's

leave. However, you are only entitled to annual leave and public holidays for the first 13 weeks of carer's leave.

You may not be dismissed for exercising your right to carer's leave. You are protected against being victimised for taking carer's leave or proposing to take it. This means that your employer cannot penalise you by dismissing you or treating you unfairly, this includes an unfavourable changes to your conditions of employment and redundancy selection.

### **Unpaid leave from employment (outside of carer's leave)**

If you want to take unpaid leave from employment for less than the 13 week minimum set down by the Carer's Leave Act, it is possible to agree this with your employer. You and your employer must agree this in writing, clearly stating the date when you will commence this leave and when you will return from leave. You will need to get in touch with PRSI records section in the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection to ensure that your social insurance record is preserved during this leave - see 'Where to apply' below.

### **How to apply**

The first step to getting carer's leave, is to have the DEASP confirm that the person you will be caring for needs that care. To do this you must complete the Carer's Benefit form.

The family doctor (GP) of the person you will be caring for will need to complete part of the application form for Carer's Benefit unless the individual is under 16 and Domiciliary Carer's Allowance is being paid for that person. Your employer will also need to fill in part of this form to confirm that you are an employee.

If you are applying for Carer's Benefit for a second person you should use the application form CARB2.

The completed application form should then be forwarded to the Carer's Benefit Section at the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The Department will then make a decision on the advice of the family doctor as to whether or not this individual requires full-time care and attention. The Department will also assess any eligibility you may have regarding Carer's Benefit.

If you are unhappy about the DEASP's decision, you can appeal this decision.

At least 6 weeks before you propose to take carer's leave from employment, you must make a formal application to your employer for this leave. In exceptional or emergency situations where it is not reasonably practicable to give 6 weeks' notice, you should give notice as soon as it is reasonably possible.

You must make your application for carer's leave in writing to your employer stating:

That you propose to take carer's leave under the Carer's Leave Act 2001 commencing on a specific date

The way in which you intend to take this leave (that is, in one continuous block, or in a series of blocks)

That you have applied to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection for a decision confirming that the person you will be caring for needs this care.

At least 2 weeks before your carer's leave is due to start you and your employer must sign the confirmation document - see 'Confirmation of carer's leave from employment' above.

### **How to complain**

Disputes with your employer under the Carer's Leave Act 2001 should be referred to the Workplace Relations Commission within 6 months of the dispute. You must use the online complaint form available on [workplacelrelations.ie](http://workplacelrelations.ie). The time limit may be extended for up to a further 6 months, but only where there is a reasonable cause which prevented the complaint being brought within the normal time limit. Disputes arising from the dismissal of an employee in relation to carer's leave are dealt with under the unfair dismissals legislation.

For further information on Carer's Benefit, contact your local Citizens Information Centre, Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Branch Office or the Carer's Benefit Section of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

### **Where to apply**

#### **Workplace Relations Commission - Information and Customer Service,**

Information and Customer Service,

O'Brien Road,

Carlow.

R93 W7W2

Opening Hours: Mon. to Fri. 9.30am to 5pm

Tel: (059) 917 8990

Locall: 1890 80 80 90

Homepage: <https://www.workplacelrelations.ie/en/>

**Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection**

Carer's Benefit Section  
Social Welfare Services Office  
Government Buildings  
Ballinalee Road  
Longford  
Ireland

Tel: (043) 334 0000  
Locall: 1890 92 77 70  
Homepage: <http://www.welfare.ie>

**PRSI Records**

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection  
McCarter's Road  
Ardaravan  
Buncrana  
Donegal  
Ireland

Tel: (01) 471 5898  
Locall: 1890 690 690  
Homepage: <http://www.welfare.ie/>

## **Carer's Benefit**

Carer's Benefit is a payment made to insured people who leave the workforce to care for a person(s) in need of full-time care and attention.

You can get Carer's Benefit for a total period of 104 weeks for each person being cared for. This may be claimed as a single continuous period or in any number of separate periods up to a total of 104 weeks. However, if you claim Carer's Benefit for less than six consecutive weeks in any given period you must wait for a further six weeks before you can claim Carer's Benefit to care for the same person again.

If you are caring for more than one person, you may receive payment for each care recipient for 104 weeks. This may result in the care periods overlapping or running concurrently.

## Rules

You may be eligible for Carer's Benefit if:

- You are aged 16 or over and under 66.
- You have been employed for at least 8 weeks, whether consecutive or not, in the previous 26 week period. You must be in employment for a minimum of 16 hours per week or 32 hours per fortnight. You don't have to meet this condition if you were getting Carer's Benefit in the previous 26 weeks.
- You give up work in order to be a full-time carer. Being a full-time carer means you must be living with or in a position to provide full-time care and attention to a person in need of care who is not living in an institution.
- You are not living in a hospital, convalescent home or other similar institution. However, you may continue to be regarded as providing full-time care and attention, if you or the person being cared for is having medical or other treatment in a hospital or other institution for a period not longer than 13 weeks.
- You meet the PRSI contribution conditions.
- The person being cared for is so incapacitated as to require full-time care and attention and is not normally living in an institution. Medical certification is required unless the person being cared for is a child who is getting Domiciliary Care Allowance. The carer of a child on a Domiciliary Care Allowance does not need to be the person who receives that allowance on the child's behalf.

- You must not take part in employment, self-employment, training or education courses outside the home for more than 15 hours a week. The maximum amount you can earn is €332.50 per week. (€332.50 is your net income after you have deducted income tax and Universal Social Charge, PRSI, superannuation (pension payments), pension levy, union dues, and subscriptions to Friendly Societies and any health insurance contract premium from your total wage.)

### **PRSI contribution conditions**

You must have at least 156 contributions paid at any time between your entry into insurance and the time you make your claim for Carer's Benefit and:

- 39 contributions paid in the Relevant Tax Year or
- 39 contributions paid in the 12-month period before the start of Carer's Benefit or
- 26 contributions paid in the Relevant Tax Year and 26 contributions paid in the year before that.

Only contributions at Class A, B, C, D, H and E can be counted towards Carer's Benefit. Class S (self-employed contributions) do not count. The Relevant Tax Year is the second last complete tax year before the year in which you make your claim. So, for claims made in 2019, the Relevant Tax Year is 2017.



Periods of insurance in another EU member state may be taken into account to meet the PRSI contribution conditions. The last week of insurance must be paid in Ireland.

You are awarded credited contributions or credits automatically when you are getting Carer's Benefit. Credits are awarded at the same rate as your last paid contribution. These credits help protect your future entitlement to social welfare benefits and pensions.

#### Claiming an increase for a child dependant

You can claim an increase for a child if they are under age 18, normally live with you and are maintained by you. If a child is in full-time education by day at a recognised school or college this increase is payable until the end of the academic year in which the child reaches age 22. (This child does not have to live at home). A full-rate Increase for a Qualified Child (IQC) is payable if you are single, widowed, separated or a civil partner who is not living with the other civil partner. You may get a half-rate IQC if you are living with your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant. If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant is getting a payment from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, you will each get a half-rate increase. You cannot claim a half-rate IQC with your Carer's Benefit if your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant has an income of over €400 a week.

## **Tax implications**

Carer's Benefit is a taxable source of income and should be advised to your local tax office.

Continuing the payment after a death

If the person you are caring for dies, payment of Carer's Benefit will continue for 6 weeks following the death.

Note: You are not entitled to the Household Benefits package and Free Travel under the Carer's Benefit Scheme.

## **How to apply**

To apply fill in a Carer's Benefit application form. This form (CARB1) is also available from any Citizens Information Centre, your local Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Branch Office or from the Carer's Benefit Section, The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection recommends that you apply for Carer's Benefit 10 weeks before you leave employment.

Parts 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 should be completed by you. Part 4 should be completed, signed and stamped by your employer. Part 10 should be completed by the person(s) receiving care from you and his/her doctor should complete, sign and stamp the Medical Report.

If you are applying for Carer's Benefit for a second person you should use the application form CARB2 (pdf).

Carer's have important legal rights. If you think your rights as a carer have been breached, you can make a complaint under the Carer's Leave Act 2001, using the online complaint form (available by selecting 'Make a complaint in relation to employment rights' on [workplacerelements.ie](http://workplacerelements.ie)).

### **Where to apply**

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection  
Carer's Benefit Section  
Social Welfare Services Office  
Government Buildings  
Ballinalee Road  
Longford  
Ireland

Tel: (043) 334 0000 (If calling from outside the Republic of Ireland please call + 353 43 334 0000)

Local: 1890 92 77 70 (Note: the rates charged for using 1890 (Lo-call) numbers may vary)

Homepage: <http://www.welfare.ie>

## **Carer's Allowance**

Carer's Allowance is a means tested payment to people on low incomes who are looking after a person who needs support because of age, disability or illness (including mental illness).

If you qualify for Carer's Allowance you may also qualify for free household benefits (if you are living with the person you are caring for) and a Free Travel Pass. Carer's Allowance is not taken into account in the assessment for a medical card.

If you think you have been wrongly refused Carer's Allowance, or you are unhappy about a decision of a Social Welfare Deciding Officer about your entitlements, you can appeal this decision.

## Rules

*To be entitled to Carer's Allowance you must:*

- Be living with, or in a position to provide full-time care and attention to a person in need of care who does not normally live in an institution. However, you may continue to be regarded as providing full-time care and attention if you or the person being cared for is undergoing medical or other treatment in a hospital or other institution, for a period not longer than 13 weeks.
- Be habitually resident in the State.
- Not live in a hospital, convalescent home or other similar institution.
- Be at least 18 years old and
- Not be engaged in employment, self-employment, training or education courses outside the home for more than 15 hours a week. During your absence, adequate care for the person requiring full-time care and attention must be arranged.

### The person you are caring for must be:

- Over the age of 16 and so incapacitated as to require full-time care and attention or
- Aged under 16 and getting a Domiciliary Care Allowance.
  - \*Domiciliary Care Allowance will not be paid over the age of 16. It is advised that an application for Disability Allowance be put in 2-3 months in advance of turning 16.

The person receiving care is regarded as requiring full-time care and attention where

- He or she is so incapacitated as to require continuous supervision in order to avoid danger to him or herself, or continual supervision and frequent assistance throughout the day in connection with normal bodily functions, and
- He or she is so incapacitated as to be likely to require full-time care and attention for a period of at least 12 months. What counts as means?

Your means are any income you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant have, or property (except your home) or an asset that could bring in money or provide you with an income, for example, an occupational pension or benefits from another country. Any payment made by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) is not taken into account in the means test for Carer's Allowance.

## Investments and savings

The actual income from investments and money in a savings account is not taken as your means. Instead, investment items such as money in a savings account, cash-in-hand or money in a current account and the cash value of investments and property are added together and a special formula is used to work out your weekly means. Find out more about how capital is assessed in the means test for Carer's Allowance.

## How means are assessed

The means test for Carer's Allowance involves assessing your income (excluding your home). If you are single, €332.50 of your gross weekly income is not taken into account (or *disregarded*). If you are married, in a civil partnership or cohabiting the first €665 of your combined gross weekly income is disregarded. PRSI, union dues, superannuation (pension contributions) and travel expenses are also deducted. For a couple, the combined gross weekly balance is then halved to give the carer's weekly means.

If you are getting a social welfare payment from another state an amount up to the maximum rate of the Irish State Pension (Contributory) is exempt from the means test. Any foreign social welfare payment above the maximum Irish State Pension (Contributory) rate is treated as income for the means test.

If you are getting maintenance payments, these are assessed (along with any other source of income) and the first €332.50 (or €665 for a couple) is disregarded.

## Carer's Allowance and half-rate payments

If you are getting certain social welfare payments and you are providing full-time care and attention to another person, you can *keep your main social welfare payment and get half-rate Carer's Allowance as well*. If you were getting another social welfare payment before claiming Carer's Allowance, you may get your original payment reinstated and also get half-rate Carer's Allowance.

If you are getting Carer's Allowance and subsequently become entitled to another payment, you can claim the other payment and get half your rate of Carer's Allowance but only if the other payment is a qualifying payment for half-rate Carer's Allowance. For example, if you are getting Carer's Allowance and work 15 hours each week, you can build up an entitlement to a contributory payment. This means, if you are out of work sick you may be entitled to Illness Benefit. In this case, you may get full-rate Illness Benefit and half-rate Carer's Allowance - although this will depend on your PRSI contributions, level of earnings and current means.

If you are being claimed for as a qualified adult on your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant's social welfare payment and you are providing full-time care to another person, you may apply for half-rate Carer's Allowance and retain your current Increase for a Qualified Adult in full. If you are parenting alone and you are providing full-time care and attention to your child or another person you can claim One-Parent Family Payment and half-rate Carer's Allowance until your youngest child turns 16 provided you continue to meet the conditions for both schemes.



## **Caring for more than one person**

If you are providing care to more than one person you may be entitled to an additional 50% of the maximum rate of Carer's Allowance each week.

## **Care sharing**

Two carers who are providing care on a part-time basis in an established pattern can also share a single Carer's Allowance payment and the annual Carer's Support Grant. Each carer must be providing care from Monday to Sunday but can do so on alternate weeks. A carer providing full-time care on a part-time basis is required under legislation to provide this care for a complete week (Monday to Sunday).

A carer who is providing care on a part-time basis to someone who attends a residential institution, for example, every other week, can also be accommodated on the Carer's Allowance scheme.

You must meet all the usual qualifying conditions for Carer's Allowance.

## **Carer's Support Grant**

The Carer's Support Grant is automatically paid to people getting Carer's Allowance in June of each year.

## **Tax implications**

Carer's Allowance is a taxable source of income and should be advised to your local tax office.

## **Credits**

You may get credited social insurance contributions (PRSI) while you are getting Carer's Allowance.

## Rates

Your payment is made up of a personal rate for yourself and extra amounts for any child dependants. Carer's Allowance has **no** qualified adult payment.

You may claim a full-rate increase in your payment for a child dependant if you are a carer and are single, widowed, separated or a civil partner who is not living with the other civil partner. You may claim a half-rate increase in your payment for a child dependant if you are a carer and are living with your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant.

## Change of circumstance

Carer's Allowance continues to be paid for 12 weeks after the death of the person being cared for.

If the person being cared for moves permanently into a residential care or nursing home the Carer's Allowance continues to be paid for a period of 12 weeks.

## How to apply

You should apply for Carer's Allowance as soon as possible. To apply, fill in an application form for Carer's Allowance (CR1) (pdf) which is available from your Intreo Centre, Social Welfare Branch Office or Citizens Information Centre. The form includes a medical report which must be signed by the person you are caring for and by their doctor. A Checklist is also included in the form which you should use to review your application before sending it in.

## **The application form (CR1)**

The application form for Carer's Allowance asks for a lot of detailed information from you. The DEASP has to work out your household income. The Department must be satisfied that you, the carer, are providing full-time care and attention and are able to do so. The Department must also examine the medical condition of the person being cared for to decide if they need full-time care and attention. You can get help with filling in the form from your local Citizens Information Centre.

The final part of the form (Part 10) is a Care Report.

## **The Care Report**

The Care Report has 3 sections:

- Section 1: is completed by you and lets you describe the care needs of the person you're caring for
- Section 2: is signed by the person you are caring for. It confirms that you are providing them with full-time care and attention and gives permission to share their medical information with the Department
- Section 3: is completed by the doctor of the person you are caring for

### **Applying to care for more than 1 person**

If you are applying for Carer's Allowance for more than 1 person in your care, you should fully complete the application form for 1 of the people being cared for and you only need to complete Parts 1, 2 and 10 of the application form (CR1) for the second person.

If you are already getting Carer's Allowance for 1 person and are applying for another, you must complete the application form (CR1) in full for the second person.

### **Carer's Allowance and Domiciliary Care Allowance**

You cannot get a Carer's Allowance for a child under 16 years of age unless Domiciliary Care Allowance(DCA) is being paid on behalf of that child. When you apply for Carer's Allowance for a child getting DCA, you do not need to get the medical report (Part 10, Section 3) completed by their doctor. If Domiciliary Care Allowance stops before the child reaches 16 years of age, Carer's Allowance will also stop.

Carer's Allowance may be reviewed at any time to make sure that you continue to be entitled to the payment. When initiating a review, the DEASP will contact you and ask you to get a medical report completed by the child's doctor and ask you to provide recent evidence to show that the child continues to require full-time care and attention.

If the DEASP find that your child meets the full-time care and attention criteria, you will continue to get your Carer's Allowance payment. If your child no longer meets the full-time care and attention criteria, your claim will be closed. You can submit more evidence or appeal this decision in the usual way.

## Appeals

If you are unhappy with a decision about your application, you can make an appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. You should appeal within 21 days of getting the decision.

## After you apply

There may be a delay in processing your Carer's Allowance claim as it may take some time for your application to be processed. You may qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance while you are waiting for your claim to be processed.

Payment will be awarded from the date your application is received or from the date the qualifying payment is awarded, if later. Forward the completed application form with the relevant certificates to Carer's Allowance Section at the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection - see address below

## Where to apply

### **Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection**

Carer's Allowance Section

Social Welfare Services Office

Government Buildings

Ballinalee Road

Longford

Ireland

**Tel:** (043) 334 0000 (If calling from outside the Republic of Ireland please call + 353 43 334 0000)

**Locall:** 1890 92 77 70 (Note: the rates charged for using 1890 (Lo-call) numbers may vary)

Application forms are also available from your local Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Branch Office.

## Carer's Support Grant

The Carer's Support Grant is an annual payment made to carer's by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). The scheme name was changed from the Respite Care Grant in 2016 to better reflect how the Grant is used. Carer's can use the grant in whatever way they wish. You can use the grant to pay for respite care if you wish, but you do not have to do so.

In June of each year (usually on the first Thursday of the month), the DEASP pays the grant automatically to carers getting Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit, or Domiciliary Care Allowance from the Department. Only one Carer's Support Grant can be paid for each person getting care.

### Rules

The grant is paid automatically to people getting Carer's Allowance (whether full-rate or half-rate), Carer's Benefit or Domiciliary Care Allowance.

It can also be paid to certain other carers. To qualify, you must be:

- Aged 16 or over
- Ordinarily resident in the State
- Caring for the person on a full-time basis
- Caring for the person for at least 6 months - this period must include the first Thursday in June
- Living with the person being cared for or, if not, be contactable quickly by a direct system of

communication (for example, telephone or alarm).

You do not qualify if you are:

- Working more than 15 hours per week outside the home
- Taking part in an education or training course for more than 15 hours a week
- Getting Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit
- Signing on for credited contributions

or

- Living in a hospital, convalescent home or similar institution

If you are caring for more than one person, a grant is paid for *each* of them.

### **Rates**

A Carer's Support Grant of €1,700 (June 2019) is paid once each year, usually on the first Thursday in June, for each person you are caring for. It is not taxable.



### **How to apply**

If you are getting Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit or Domiciliary Care Allowance, you do not need to apply for the Carer's Support Grant. It will be automatically paid to you in June.

If you are not getting one of the above payments, you should fill in an application form CSG 1 (pdf) in respect of each person you are caring for.

If you were not getting one of the above payments but got the Carer's Support Grant last year, you do not need to re-apply this year. The Department will send you a letter and a short 2-page questionnaire in April. You must return the completed questionnaire as it will be used to assess you for the Carer's Support Grant this year.

### **When to apply**

You can apply for a Carer's Support Grant for any given year from April of that year until 31 December of the following year. So, for example, you can apply for a grant for 2018 at any time from April 2018 up until 31 December 2019.

### **Where to apply**

You can download a Carer's Support Grant application form or get one from your Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Branch Office or Citizens Information Centre.

### **Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection**

Carer's Support Grant Section  
PO Box 10085  
Dublin 2

**Tel:** (01) 673 2222 (If calling from outside the Republic of Ireland please call + 353 1 673 2222)

**Homepage:** <http://www.welfare.ie>

## Household Benefits Package

The Household Benefits Package is a package of allowances which help you with the costs of running your household. The package is available to everyone aged over 70 and to people under age 70 in certain circumstances. You must be legally resident and living permanently in the State.

Only one person in a household can qualify for the package at any time. You must show that you are the registered consumer at the address for which you are applying for the Household Benefits Package, for example, by providing a utility bill. If you are renting your home, your landlord must provide written confirmation that you are a tenant (including the MPRN or GPRN of the address you are living at) and confirm that you are paying your own energy bills.

### Allowances

There are 2 allowances in the Household Benefits Package:

#### Allowance 1

- The Electricity Allowance **or**
- Natural Gas Allowance **or**

If you have an electricity and natural gas supply, you can only choose either the Electricity Allowance or the Natural Gas Allowance.

### *Electricity Allowance paid monthly*

The Electricity Allowance is paid either to your bank account or post office or it can be paid directly to your electricity supplier as a credit against your electricity bill each month. (This only applies to customers of Bord Gáis Energy and Electric Ireland.)

### *Natural Gas Allowance*

Depending on your supplier, the Natural Gas Allowance of €35 (equal to €1.15 per day) can be paid as a cash credit on your gas bill or, on the first Tuesday of each month, to an account in a financial institution or a post office.

The Allowance does not cover the cost of installing a natural gas supply to your home.

If the Allowance is paid as a credit on your gas bill, the Department notifies your gas provider, who will apply the allowance, including any backdated credit, on your second gas bill after that date.

You must satisfy some conditions to qualify for the Natural Gas Allowance. You must show proof that you are the registered consumer on the energy bills (MPRN/GPRN). If you are renting and the utility bill is in the landlord's name, your landlord must provide written confirmation, (including the MPRN or GPRN of the address you are living at), that you are a tenant and are paying your own energy bills.

### **If you change energy supplier**

- It is very important to note that if you change energy supplier, it is your responsibility to notify the Department of this change. You must provide proof of your new provider (utility bill in your name) from the change date

### **Allowance 2**

#### ***Free Television Licence***

Once you qualify for the Household Benefits Package, you become eligible for a Free Television Licence from the next renewal date of your television licence. You must select the Television Licence option on the form when you apply for the Household Benefits package.

When you qualify for the Household Benefits Package and have been awarded a Free Television Licence, the Department issues you with a TV licence, and also notifies An Post of your entitlement to a free licence for as long as you are entitled to the Household Benefits Package.

## Rules

You qualify for the Household Benefits Package if **you are aged 70 or over**. You do not need to be getting a State pension and the package is not means tested. You also qualify if you are getting Carer's Allowance, whether on a full or half-rate payment, but you must be providing full-time care and living with the person you are caring for. Everyone getting the Household Benefits Package must also meet general conditions.

You can also qualify for the Household Benefits Package if:

- You are caring for a person who is getting Constant Attendance Allowance

## Change of circumstances

You must notify the Department if:

- You change address
- You change energy provider
- You are under 70 years of age and your household composition changes
- You move into residential care

If you change address and you still satisfy the conditions for the Household Benefits Package, you must re-apply for the package

## Where to apply

To apply, fill in form HB1 (pdf). You can get more information about the Household Benefits Package on the Department's website.

Return your completed application form to the Household Benefits Package section:

### **Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection**

Social Welfare Services  
College Road  
Sligo  
Ireland

**Opening Hours:** This office does not offer a service to personal callers. All queries must be made using the online enquiry form, by telephone or in writing.

**Tel:** (071) 915 7100 (If calling from outside the Republic of Ireland please call + 353 71 915 7100)

**Local:** 1890 500 000 (Note: the rates charged for using 1890 (Lo-call) numbers may vary)

**Homepage:** <http://www.welfare.ie/>

You can email the Household Benefits Package Section using the secure enquiry form. If you wish to talk to someone face-to-face about your entitlements, you can visit your local Citizens Information Centre, Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Branch Office.

## Free Travel in Ireland

People receiving Carer's Allowance (but not Carer's Benefit) may be entitled to Free Travel. In some cases, a Free Travel Companion Card is available which allows a person to travel with the holder (if they are unable to travel alone). Free Travel Cards are non-transferable and can only be used by the named person.

Free travel is available on all State public transport (bus, rail and Dublin's LUAS service) with some exceptions.

Free travel is also available on a limited number of services operated by private bus transport companies.

### **SAFE registration and Public Services Card**

The SAFE registration process (pdf) is used to establish and verify your identity. Your free travel pass will be contained in the Public Services Card (PSC) that issues following this registration. You must undergo SAFE registration when requested to do so by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Your entitlement to free travel will be disallowed or withdrawn if you don't register.

You must show your Public Services Card to the travel operator when you are travelling on public transport. (In some cases, you may be asked to scan your Public Services Card, though not all transport operators have this facility.) When you receive your new Public Services Card, you must return your old free travel pass to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (see 'Where to apply' below).



## Rules

You may be entitled to free travel if you are legally resident and permanently living in the State and:

- Receiving Carer's Allowance from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
- You have confirmed your identity through the SAFE registration process (pdf) when requested to do so

## Where free travel can be used

Free travel is available on most Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, DART and Luas Services and on certain private bus and ferry services. Free travel does not include some special services such as Dublin Bus AIRLINK services. You may also travel free of charge on certain cross-border services between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Free travel is also available on the Dublin Bus NITELINK service.

If you are permanently living on any of the Aran Islands, you may get up to 12 single (or 6 return) air trips each year between the islands and the mainland. People who live permanently on Tory Island (Co. Donegal) are entitled to 8 (or 4 return) free journeys on the seasonal helicopter service operating between the island and the mainland.

There are no restrictions on the times you can use your Free Travel Card.

### **How to apply**

If you are under age 66 and have confirmed your identity through the SAFE registration process, you will get a Free Travel Card automatically when you are awarded an Invalidity Pension, a Blind Pension, Disability Allowance or *Carer's Allowance*. If you have not SAFE registered, you will be requested to do so before your Free Travel Card issues to you.

In all other circumstances, you must apply for free travel by completing a Free Travel application form FT1 (pdf).

### **Lost or damaged Free Travel Passes**

There are currently 2 types of Free Travel Pass - a paper Free Travel Pass and a Public Services Card Free Travel (with F-T written in the top left-hand corner).

Paper passes are no longer being issued so if you need a replacement for a lost or damaged paper pass you must undergo SAFE registration and get a Public Services Card.

If your Public Services Card Free Travel is lost, stolen or damaged, you should telephone 1890 837000 to request a replacement card.

## **Where to apply**

### **Free Travel Section**

Social Welfare Services  
College Road  
Sligo  
Ireland

**Tel:** (071) 915 7100 (If calling from outside the Republic of Ireland please call +353 71 915 7100)

**Locall:** 1890 500 000 (Note: the rates charged for using 1890 (Lo-call) numbers may vary)

**Homepage:** <http://www.welfare.ie/>

You can email the Free Travel section using the secure enquiry form. If you wish to talk to someone face-to-face about your entitlements, you can visit your local Citizens Information Centre, Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Branch Office.

## Fuel Allowance

Fuel Allowance is a payment under the National Fuel Scheme to help with the cost of heating your home during the winter months. It is paid to people who are dependent on long-term social welfare payments and who are unable to provide for their own heating needs. Only one Fuel Allowance is paid to a household.

Fuel Allowance is generally paid with your social welfare payment on the same day. You can choose to get Fuel Allowance paid weekly or to get your total allowance paid in 2 lump sums.

Carer's Allowance **is not** a qualifying payment for Fuel Allowance. **However**, you may qualify for Fuel Allowance if you are getting half-rate Carer's Allowance and another qualifying social welfare payment:

- If you are getting a non-contributory social welfare payment and a half-rate Carer's Allowance, then Fuel Allowance is payable (if you meet all the criteria).
- If you are getting a contributory social welfare payment and a half-rate Carer's Allowance, then the value of the half-rate Carer's Allowance will be assessed in the means test for Fuel Allowance (see below).

## Means test for Fuel Allowance

Fuel Allowance is a means-tested payment. If you are getting a non-contributory social welfare payment, you are accepted as satisfying the means test. If you are on an employment support scheme or if you are getting a Back to Education Allowance you are entitled to keep your Fuel Allowance if you continue to satisfy the conditions – including the means test.

The Fuel Allowance means test is linked to the maximum rate of the State Pension (Contributory).

You can have a combined weekly income of €100 above the maximum State Pension (Contributory) for your situation and still be eligible for a Fuel Allowance. This means that you can have capital/savings, providing they are less than €58,000, and be eligible for a Fuel Allowance. (€58,000 is equivalent to just over €100 a week under the capital means assessment rules.)

For example:

- The assessable income limit for a single person under 80 is €343.30 (€100 plus €243.30)
- The assessable income limit for a couple (where the qualified adult is aged under 66) is €505.40 (€100 plus €243.30 plus €162.10)
- The assessable income limit for a couple (where the qualified adult is aged 66 or over) is €561.30 (€100 plus €243.30 plus €218)

If you are over 80, add an extra €10 to the appropriate DEASP payment rate.

**There are a number of Tax Credits Carers can claim for.**

## **Home Carer Tax Credit**

Home Carer Tax Credit is a tax credit given to married couples or civil partners (who are jointly assessed for tax) where one spouse or civil partner works in the home caring for a dependent person.

The tax you are liable to pay is calculated as a percentage of your income. A tax credit is deducted from this to give the actual amount of tax that you have to pay. A tax credit has the effect of reducing your payable tax by the amount of the credit.

## **Rules**

A Home Carer Tax Credit can be claimed when:

- The married couple or civil partners are jointly assessed for tax
- One spouse or civil partner works in the home caring for one or more dependent people
- The home carer's own income is under €7,200. A reduced tax credit applies if the carer's income is between €7,200 and €10,200.

Carer's Allowance or Carer's Benefit are **not** taken into account when determining the home carer's income but they are taxable sources of income. This means that if you are claiming Carer's Allowance or Carer's Benefit, it will make up part of your jointly assessed income

## Who is a dependent person?

A dependent person is a:

- Child for whom Child Benefit is payable
- Person aged 65 or over
- Person with a disability who requires care

A dependent person you are caring for **cannot be a spouse or civil partner**. They can however, be a relative by marriage, or someone for whom you act as a legal guardian.

## Where to apply

Applications for the Home Carer Tax Credit should be made to Revenue.

For more information on this credit go onto [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie) or Revenue website

## Tax relief on employing the cost of a Home Carer

You can claim tax relief on the cost of employing a carer either if you employ one for yourself, or for another family member.

You can employ the carer directly or you can use an agency that employs carers. If you employ the carer yourself, you should register as an employer and you will be responsible for your employee's tax and social insurance (PAYE, Universal Social Charge and PRSI). You will also have other duties and obligations as an employer, for example regarding hours of work, contracts of employment, pay slips, holidays and the minimum wage.

## Rules

If you pay an agency to provide the carer, the agency will employ the carer and be responsible for their tax and social insurance etc. You can still claim tax relief on the cost of paying the agency to provide a carer.

If you employ a carer for **yourself** or on behalf of a **family member**, you can claim the tax relief on the cost of that care. A *family member* is a spouse, civil partner, child or a relative, including a relation by marriage or civil partnership.

The person being cared for must be totally incapacitated for the complete tax year (January to December) in which you are claiming the tax relief but the carer **does not have to be employed** for the full tax year. The term *totally incapacitated* means that the person being cared for is disabled and requires a carer.

You cannot claim tax relief for employing a carer if the carer only carries out housekeeper duties or if a Dependent Relative Tax Credit or an Incapacitated Child Tax Credit has already been granted.

You may be asked by the Revenue Commissioners to get a medical certificate to confirm the nature of the disability but it isn't necessary to send one in with your application form.



## Home nursing

You can claim tax relief on the cost of employing a qualified nurse at home. Tax relief for nursing at home is claimed as a health expense.

### Rates

Tax allowances and reliefs reduce the amount of tax that you have to pay. The amount by which a *tax allowance/relief will reduce your tax depends on your rate of tax.*

The maximum amount of relief for employing a carer is €75,000 in 2018 (It was €75,000 in 2017, 2016 and 2015 and €50,000 in 2014). You **must** claim the relief **each year**. You can get tax relief on the cost of employing a carer, less any amount recovered from the Health Service Executive (HSE). If two or more of you pay for the care, the relief is divided between you in proportion to the amount each paid.

### Where to Apply

Send completed application form to your local Revenue Office

## Incapacitated Child Tax Credit

You can claim an Incapacitated Child Tax Credit if you are the parent or guardian of a child who is permanently incapacitated, either physically or mentally and

- Became so before reaching 21 years of age **or**
- Becomes permanently incapacitated after reaching the age of 21, but while still in full-time education or while training for a trade or profession for a minimum of 2 years.

You can also claim the credit for:

- A stepchild
- An adopted child
- Any child of whom you have custody, who is maintained at your own expense and who is permanently incapacitated

You can claim a credit for more than one child where more than one child is permanently incapacitated.

Where the child is maintained by one parent only, that parent is entitled to claim the full amount of the tax credit. However, where the child is maintained by more than one person, the tax credit is divided between them in proportion to the amount paid by each towards the maintenance of the child.

You can claim this tax credit or the Dependent Relative Tax Credit but not both for the same child.

The tax credit can be claimed by employees paying PAYE as well as by self-employed people.

## Qualifying disabilities

Disabilities regarded as permanently incapacitating are:

- Cystic Fibrosis
- Spina Bifida
- Blindness
- Deafness
- Down Syndrome
- Spastic paralysis
- Certain forms of schizophrenia
- Acute autism

This is not an exhaustive list.

A credit is not due where the child is fully maintained at public or charitable expense.

You may also claim tax relief for medical expenses incurred by yourself or any other person.

## Rates

In 2018, the Incapacitated Child Tax Credit is €3,300.

## How to apply

You can claim the Incapacitated Child Tax Credit by completing Form ICC1 (pdf). You will also need to get Form ICC2 (pdf) certified by the child's medical practitioner.

If you are a PAYE taxpayer, you can claim the credit online through Revenue's myAccount service. If you are self-employed and pay tax under the self-assessment

system, the credit is claimed by completing the 'Incapacitated Child' section on your annual tax return online at the Revenue Online Service (ROS).

If you claim using Revenue's myAccount service, you do not need to submit forms ICC1 and ICC2. However, Revenue may ask to see them if your claim is checked. You must keep these forms for six years once you have made a claim.

### **Where to apply**

To your local Revenue Office

You can read more about the Incapacitated Child Tax Credit on the Revenue website or Citizensinformation.ie

### **GP Visit Card for Carers**

If you get Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance, at full or half rate, you can visit your GP for free.

To register by post, download the form on hse.ie in English or Irish or LoCall 1890 252 919 to order one in the post. Alternatively you can acquire forms in your local Citizens Information.

You can also register online at <https://www.mymedicalcard.ie/>

## Disabled Person's Parking Card

Disabled Person's Parking Permits or Cards (also known as European Parking Cards or Disabled Parking Badge) are available to people living in Ireland with certain disabilities and those who are registered blind, whether they are drivers or passengers. The parking card can be used by a disabled person in any vehicle in which he or she is travelling. This means that a disabled person who is being driven at different times by different people can bring the parking card with himself or herself and display it in the appropriate vehicle. The parking card is valid for 2 years from date of issue. Generally, the card is not issued to anyone under 5 years of age.

Please note, you will need to check with your local council the length you are permitted to spend parked in a disabled parking bay. **This may vary from County to County**

### Where to Apply

#### Disabled Drivers Association

Parking Card Section

Ballindine

Claremorris

Mayo

Tel: (094)9364054

Email:info@ddai.ie

#### Irish Wheelchair Association

National Mobility Centre

Ballinagappa Road

Clane, Kildare

Tel: (045)893094/95 Email: maats@iwa.ie

## **Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability**

A housing adaptation grant is available where changes need to be made to a home to make it suitable for a person with a physical, sensory or intellectual disability or mental health difficulty to live in.

The grant can help you to make changes and adaptations to your home, for example, making it wheelchair-accessible, extending it to create more space, adding a ground-floor bathroom or toilet or a stair-lift. In some cases, the provision of heating can be included, but only under certain conditions.

Application forms are available online on the County Council website, in your local County Council Offices or in your local Citizens Information

## Supports

### **Louth Family Carers Support Group**

Regular meetings are held in various locations.

Contact by phone at 086 318 467 or email  
louthfamilycarers@gmail.com

Also contactable and more details on Louth Family  
Carers Support Group Facebook Page

### **Alzheimer's Support Groups**

#### **Rath Abbey Support Group**

St James' House,  
Rath Abbey,  
Grange,  
Carlingford,  
Louth

#### **Opening Hours**

1st Wednesday of each month.

**Contact:** Olive Joyce

**Phone:** 042 935 1388

### **Drogheda Support Group**

The Stables (Opp The Augustinian House),  
Bachelor's Lane,  
Drogheda,  
Louth

#### **Opening Hours**

1st Wednesday of each month

**Contact:** Ann Shortt / Helen Barron

**Phone:** 041 984 1311 / 087 289 3698

**Email:** ann@shortts.com / helen.barron@alzheimer.ie

### **Dundalk Support Group**

The Birches Alzheimer Day Care Centre,  
Priorland Road,  
Dundalk,  
Louth

#### **Opening Hours**

1st Tuesday of every month at 7pm

**Contact:** Olive Joyce

**Phone:** 042 935 1388



## Memory Clinic Louth

A memory clinic service is available for people who are worried about their memory. The clinic can diagnose memory problems as well as give you information, treatment and advice.

There are currently 25 memory clinics operating in Ireland. Some clinics offer a nationwide service; others offer services to people living in particular part of the country.

The clinics work with people who are experiencing memory problems to diagnose the cause of these problems. Most clinics only accept referrals from GP's or other medical doctors. Therefore, if you are concerned about your memory you should visit your GP to discuss.

### **Address**

Memory Clinic (Cognitive Disorders Service),  
Mental Health Services for Older People,  
St Brigids Complex,  
Kells Rd,  
Ardee,  
Co Louth.

Contact: 041 685 0665

## Memory Cafe

Alzheimer Cafes provide a warm and welcoming space for people with dementia, their family and friends and social and health care professionals to meet, exchange ideas and learnings.

The Café is based on an international model and usually opens monthly in the early evening. Some cafes open during the day, and all provide light refreshments and a mix of education and support.

The cafes provide an informal way to meet others living with dementia and meet health and social care professionals. Usually an expert speaker is invited each month to talk to the café about a topic of interest, however the café is also a space to chat and enjoy a social occasion in a supportive environment.

### **Address**

Relish Café  
Laurence St  
Drogheda  
Co Louth

### **Opening Hours**

Meets on 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 6-8pm

**Contact:** Ann Shortt / Helen Barron

**Phone:** 041 984 1311 / 087 289 3698

**Email:** [ann@shortts.com](mailto:ann@shortts.com) / [helen.barron@alzheimer.ie](mailto:helen.barron@alzheimer.ie)

### **Netwell Centre**

The HSE and Netwell Centre provide dementia information, signposting, and assistance with form filling and dementia education for family carers who have a family member living with dementia.

**Contact:** Ann Marron,  
HSE Dementia Case Manager,  
CHO8

**Phone:** 0871959136

**Email:** [ann.marron@hse.ie](mailto:ann.marron@hse.ie)

**North Leinster  
Citizens Information Service**

**Louth Offices**

**Dundalk Citizens Information Centre**

3-6 Adelphi Plaza  
Long Walk  
Dundalk  
Co. Louth

Open Monday Tuesday Thursday Friday 9.30am to 12.00pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm for personal callers.  
Closed Wednesday morning open Wednesday 2 to 4pm.

**Telephone:** 0761 07 5950

**Lines open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm**

**Email:** [dundalk@citinfo.ie](mailto:dundalk@citinfo.ie)

**Drogheda Citizens Information Centre**

86 West Street  
Drogheda  
Co. Louth

Open Monday to Friday 9.30am to 12.00pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm for Personal Callers.

**Telephone:** 0761 07 5940

**Lines open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm**

**Email:** [drogheda@citinfo.ie](mailto:drogheda@citinfo.ie)

**North Leinster  
Citizens Information Service**

**Regional Offices**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Ashbourne	0761076110	ashbourne@citinfo.ie
Athlone	0761076610	athlone@citinfo.ie
Athy	0761078260	athy@citinfo.ie
Longford	0761075890	Longford@citinfo.ie
Maynooth	0761078100	maynooth@citinfo.ie
Mullingar	0761076660	Mullingar@citinfo.ie
Naas	0761078280	naas@citinfo.ie
Navan	0761 07 6150	navan@citinfo.ie
Newbridge	0761078300	newbridge@citinfo.ie
Trim	0761076180	trim@citinfo.ie

**For a full list of our Citizens Information Centres and opening times, please visit:**

[www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)

**Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS)**

CIPS is a nationwide service that can be reached on 0761 07 4000, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm.

Revised 11/04/2019