



Main Social Welfare Changes and Rates of Payments

Budget 2015 – Department of Social Protection

All existing schemes and supports fully protected for 2015

€198 million of targeted welfare increases and new incentives

New Back to Work Family Dividend to help lone parent and long-term unemployed families return to work – additional €1,550 per child to be made available in first year of employment or self-employment

€1.1 billion in total to be spent on employment supports in 2015

€1.97 billion for Child Benefit in 2015 - 613,000 families to get increase of €5 extra per month per child from January

Christmas Bonus of 25% of weekly payment to be paid this December to long-term welfare recipients

Return to Work Initiatives

- ◆ New Back to Work Family Dividend to be introduced for lone parent and long-term jobseeker families with children who find or return to work.
- ◆ There will be a doubling of JobsPlus places from 3,000 to 6,000 to incentivise employers to hire long-term unemployed people at a cost of €12 million in 2015.
- ◆ €12 million will be provided for the new employment support programme JobPath.

Families with Children

- ◆ Child Benefit to increase by €5 to €135 per month for each child from January 2015.
- ◆ Funding for School Meals Programme to increase by €2 million to €39 million in 2015.

Older People and People with Disabilities

- ◆ Living Alone Allowance to be increased from €7.70 to €9.00 per week at a cost of €12 million a year – 177,500 pensioners and people with disabilities to benefit.

Support for Water Services

- ◆ €25 per quarter to be paid to pensioners, people with disabilities and carers receiving the Household Benefits Package at a cost of €42 million in 2015 - 415,000 households to benefit.
- ◆ Increase of €100 per annum for all Fuel Allowance recipients who do not receive the Household Benefits Package, at a cost of €24 million – 238,000 households to benefit.

UPDATE:

The Water Conservation Grant replaces the tax rebate and social protection measures previously announced above.

For further information on the Water Conservation Grant please click:

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/pages/water-charges-and-your-water-conservation-grant.aspx>

Return to Work Supports

€1.1 billion to be spent on Employment Supports in 2015

- New Back to Work Family Dividend will be introduced for lone parent and long-term jobseeker families with children who find or return to work from January 2015.
- The Back to Work Family Dividend will also apply to lone parent and long-term jobseeker families with children who commence or return to self-employment.
- The Qualified Child Increase worth €29.80 per week will be paid in full for the first year in employment and half that amount will be paid weekly for the second year.
- The Back to Work Family Dividend will be additional to any entitlement the family may have under the Family Income Supplement (FIS) scheme and will not affect the level of the FIS payment.
- There will be a doubling of JobsPlus places from 3,000 to 6,000 to incentivise employers to hire long-term unemployed people from the Live Register. Employers can receive up to €10,000 in monthly cash grants over two years for each eligible employee.

Families with Children

€2.4 billion to support Families with Children in 2015

- The rate of Child Benefit will increase by €5 to €135 per month for each child from January 2015.

Child Benefit

Number of Children	2014 Monthly Rate	2015 Monthly Rate	2015 Annual Rate	Yearly Increase From 2014
	€	€	€	€
1 child	130	135	1,620	60
2 children	260	270	3,240	120
3 children	390	405	4,860	180
4 children	520	540	6,480	240
5 children	650	675	8,100	300
6 children	780	810	9,720	360

- Families with twins receive one and a half times the normal monthly rate for each child. Families with multiple births receive Child Benefit at double the normal monthly rate for each child.
- An extra €2 million will be provided for the Department's School Meals Programme in 2015.
- Over €349 million will be provided for Family Income Supplement (FIS) in 2015.
- The Qualified Child Increase which is paid to people getting weekly social welfare payments is maintained.
- The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance is also maintained.

Older People and People with Disabilities

€9.25 billion to support Older People and People with Disabilities in 2015

- Living Alone Allowance will be increased by €1.30 to €9.00 per week from January 2015 – 177,500 people to benefit.
- Pensioners aged 80 and over continue to receive an extra €10 per week.
- The Free Travel scheme is fully maintained.
- The Electricity/Gas Allowance and Free TV Licence are unchanged.

Water Services Supports

€66 million to assist with Water Costs in 2015

- €25 per quarter to be paid to pensioners, people with disabilities and carers receiving a Household Benefits Package, at a cost of €42 million in 2015.
- €100 per annum will be provided to all Fuel Allowance recipients who do not already receive the Household Benefits Package, at a cost of €24 million in 2015. Fuel Allowance is paid to people in receipt of payments such as Long-term Jobseekers Allowance and One Parent Family payment.

The Water Conservation Grant replaces the tax rebate and social protection measures previously announced above.

For further information on the Water Conservation Grant please click:

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/pages/water-charges-and-your-water-conservation-grant.aspx>

Christmas Bonus

€63.5 million to be paid to long-term welfare recipients

- A 25% Christmas Bonus will be paid this December to recipients of a long-term Social Welfare payment (minimum payment of €20) – over 1.16 million people to benefit.

People in receipt of the following payments will receive the Bonus: State pensions, Blind Pension, Invalidity pension, Widow's/widower's pension, Guardian's payment, One Parent Family payment, Deserted Wife's Benefit, Deserted Wife's Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Pre-Retirement Allowance, Disability Allowance, Farm Assist, Long-term Jobseeker's Allowance, Back to Work Allowance, Community Employment, Job Initiative, Rural Social Scheme, Tús, Gateway, Domiciliary Care allowance and certain occupational injuries benefits.

For more information check www.welfare.ie and www.citizensinformation.ie.

Telephone the Department of Social Protection on 1890 66 22 44 (LoCall) or 071-9193302 from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Telephone the Citizens Information Phone Service on 0761 07 4000, 9am - 9pm Monday to Friday

Contact your local Intreo Centre, Social Welfare Office or Citizens Information Centre

Note: The rates charged for 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary among different service providers.

Maximum Weekly Rates	Personal Rate		Increase for a Qualified Adult		Qualified Child Increase
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014/2015
<u>Social Insurance Payments</u>					
State Pension (Contributory)	€	€	€	€	€
- Under Age 80	230.30	230.30	153.50 *	153.50 *	29.80
- Aged 80 and over	240.30	240.30	206.30**	206.30**	29.80
Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension/Deserted Wife's Benefit					
- Under Age 66	193.50	193.50			29.80
- Aged 66 and under Age 80	230.30	230.30			29.80
- Aged 80 and over	240.30	240.30			29.80
Invalidity Pension	193.50	193.50	138.10	138.10	29.80
Carer's Benefit/Constant Attendance Allowance	205.00	205.00			29.80
Disablement Benefit	219.00	219.00			
Jobseeker's/Illness/Health & Safety/Injury Benefit	188.00	188.00	124.80	124.80	29.80
Maternity/Adoptive Benefit	230.00	230.00			
Death Benefit					
- Under Age 66	218.50	218.50			29.80
- Aged 66 and under Age 80	234.70	234.70			29.80
- Aged 80 and over	244.70	244.70			29.80

<u>Social Assistance Payments</u>					
State Pension (Non-Contributory)					
- Aged 66 and under Age 80	219.00	219.00	144.70	144.70	29.80
- Aged 80 and over	229.00	229.00			29.80
Carer's Allowance					
- Under Age 66	204.00	204.00			29.80
- Aged 66 and over	239.00	239.00			29.80
Disability Allowance/Blind Pension	188.00	188.00	124.80	124.80	29.80
Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension	188.00	188.00			
One-Parent Family Payment	188.00	188.00			29.80
Pre-Retirement/Deserted Wife's Allowance	188.00	188.00	124.80	124.80	29.80
Jobseeker's Allowance - Aged 26 or over	188.00	188.00	124.80	124.80	29.80
- Aged 25	144.00	144.00	124.80	124.80	29.80
- Aged 18 -24	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	29.80
Supplementary Welfare Allowance - Aged 26 or over	186.00	186.00	124.80	124.80	29.80
- Aged 25	144.00	144.00	124.80	124.80	29.80
- Aged 18 -24	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	29.80
Farm Assist	188.00	188.00	124.80	124.80	29.80

* for those under age 66 years

** for those aged 66 or over

Family Income Supplement (FIS)		
Family Size	2014 Income Limit	2015 Income Limit
1 child	€506	€506
2 children	€602	€602
3 children	€703	€703
4 children	€824	€824
5 children	€950	€950
6 children	€1,066	€1,066
7 children	€1,202	€1,202
8 children or more	€1,298	€1,298

The level of FIS payment will continue to be based on 60% of the shortfall between net weekly family income and the applicable weekly family threshold.

<u>Other Social Welfare Payments</u>		
	2014 weekly	2015 weekly
Guardian's Payment (Contributory)	€161.00	€161.00
Guardian's Payment (Non-Contributory)	€161.00	€161.00
	2014 monthly	2015 monthly
Domiciliary Care Allowance	€309.50	€309.50
	2014 annually	2015 annually
Respite Care Grant	€1,375.00	€1,375.00
	2014 - once off payment	2015 - once off payment
Widowed or Surviving Civil Partner Grant	€6,000.00	€6,000.00
	2014 weekly	2015 weekly
Living Alone Allowance	€7.70	€9.00