

APPENDIX 2

SOCIAL INSURANCE PAYMENTS

1. DISABILITY BENEFIT

Disability Benefit

- 1.1 Disability Benefit (DB) is a PRSI-based weekly payment payable to qualified insured people aged under 66 years who are unfit for work due to illness. This payment is administered by DSFA.

Contribution Conditions

- 1.2 To qualify, a person must have –
- at least 52 PRSI contributions paid since first starting work, and
 - at least 39 contributions paid or credited (at least 13 of which must be paid) in the relevant tax year,
- or
- 26 weeks PRSI paid in the relevant income tax year and 26 weeks PRSI paid in the tax year immediately before the relevant income tax year.

Proof of Incapacity for Work

- 1.3 Medical certificates from the claimant's doctor confirming incapacity for work must be submitted on a regular basis (usually weekly) and claimants may also be requested to attend for medical examination by a Medical Assessor of the DSFA.

Duration of Payment

- 1.4 DB is paid on the basis of a 6-day week (Sundays are not included). Normally DB is not payable for the first 3 days of illness (known as "waiting days"). Where a person has less than 260 PRSI contributions paid (5 full years), DB is payable for up to 52 weeks. At the end of this period, the claimant can re-qualify for benefit by making up an extra 13 paid contributions (or a smaller number if it brings your total to 260). Where at least 260 PRSI contributions have been paid since first starting work, DB can continue to be paid for as long as the person remains unfit for work and under age 66.

Rates of Payment

- 1.5 The rate of DB payable depends on the claimant's family size, circumstances and earnings. Payment is made up of a personal rate in respect of the claimant and additional increases may be payable in the case of qualified adults and qualified children. The current weekly rates of payment are – Personal Rate: €165.80; Increase for a

qualified adult: €110.00: Increase for each qualified child: €16.80.
Where a claimant's spouse or partner is not a qualified adult, increases in respect of qualified children are generally payable at half-rate, depending on the exact circumstances.

Where the claimant's average weekly earnings are below €150.00, the personal rate of DB and the increase in respect of a qualified adult are payable at reduced rates. Full-rate DB is payable where the claimant's average weekly earnings are €150.00 or over.

If a person is in receipt of a Widow/er's Pension, a One-Parent Family Payment or an analogous payment, then DB can be paid in addition for a period of up to 15 months where s/he has 260 PRSI contributions, otherwise for 12 months only if s/he has less than 260 PRSI contributions paid. DB is paid at ½ the personal rate in these circumstances and no increase in DB is payable in respect of qualified children. Where a person does not qualify for full rate of One-Parent Family Payment, the rate of DB payable may be 'topped up' to make up the deficit. In addition, if a person is getting either Blind Person's Pension or Orphan's Pension, then DB can also be paid in full for the duration of the illness including qualified dependents.

Taxation of DB

- 1.6 Disability Benefit payments (excluding any increases for qualified children) are regarded as taxable income. However, DB payments for the first 36 days (6 weeks) in each tax year are exempt from tax.

2. INVALIDITY PENSION

Invalidity Pension

- 2.1 Invalidity Pension (IP) is payable to qualified insured people who are permanently incapable of work. This payment is administered by DSFA.

Contribution Conditions

- 2.2 To qualify, a person must have -
- at least 260 PRSI contributions paid since first starting work; and
 - at least 48 contributions paid or credited in the last complete tax year before the claim is made.

Proof of Permanent Incapacity for Work

- 2.3 In order to be regarded as being permanently incapable of work, a person must have been incapable of work for at least one year and likely to remain so incapable for at least a further year. In most cases

applicants would have been in receipt of DB prior to claiming IP. Where a person can show that they are likely to remain incapable of work for life, IP may be paid to persons who have been incapable of work for less than one year.

Duration of Payment

- 2.4 Invalidity Pension is payable for as long as a person remains permanently incapable of work. Payment ceases, however, if the person is awarded another social welfare pension, e.g. Old Age (Contributory), Retirement or Widow/er's (Contributory) Pension (with the exception of Disablement Pension).

Rates of Payment

- 2.5 The rate of IP payable depends on the claimant's family size and circumstances. Payment is made up of a personal rate in respect of the claimant and additional increases may be payable in the case of qualified adults and qualified children. The current weekly rates of payment are - Personal Rate: €171.30 (under 65 years), € 193.30 (65 and over); Increase for a qualified adult: €122.20 (under 66 years), €149.30 (66 and over); Increase for each qualified child: €19.30. Where a claimant's spouse or partner is not a qualified adult, any increases in respect of qualified children are generally payable at half-rate. Additional allowances of €7.70 and €10.00, respectively are payable to Invalidity Pensioners who are living alone and pensioners aged 80 or over. An allowance of €12.70 is payable to Invalidity Pensioners who are living on certain offshore islands.

Taxation of IP

- 2.6 Income from Invalidity Pension is assessable for income tax purposes. However, if IP is the person's only income, it would be below the thresholds for the payment of income tax.

3. OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES BENEFITS

- 3.1 The Occupational Injuries Benefits (OIB) scheme is administered by DSFA and comprises a range of following payments for people who are injured or disabled in the course of their work, or who contract a prescribed occupational disease:-

- Injury Benefit;
- Disablement Benefit;
- Death Benefits;
- Cost of Medical Care.

Contribution Conditions for Occupational Injury Benefits

- 3.2 There are no contribution conditions applying to the OIB schemes. Once the accident or prescribed disease arises out of and in the course of employment which is insurable for OIB purposes, the person is covered for Occupational Injuries Benefits. In addition, accidents which occur while a person is travelling directly to or from work are deemed to be occupational accidents.

3.3 Injury Benefit

- 3.3.1 This is a weekly payment payable to people who are unfit for work due to an accident at work or who have contracted a prescribed work-related disease.

Proof of Incapacity for Work

- 3.3.2 Medical certificates from the claimant's doctor confirming incapacity for work must be submitted on a regular basis and claimants may also be requested to attend for medical examination by a Medical Assessor of the DSFA.

Not all accidents at work result in immediate illness or disablement. In such cases, in order to protect future rights to benefit, a person can apply for a declaration that the accident happened at work.

Duration of Payment

- 3.3.3 As in the case of Disability Benefit, Injury Benefit is not normally paid for the first 3 days (known as "waiting days"). Payment can last for a maximum of 26 weeks from the date of the accident or the onset of the disease. People who are still incapable of work after 26 weeks may be entitled to Disability Benefit or, if they do not qualify for DB or IP and are permanently incapable of work, they may be entitled to Unemployability Supplement (see section 3.5 below).

Rates of Payment

- 3.3.4 The rates of Injury Benefit payable are the same as the rates of payment for Disability Benefit, including the increases for qualified adults and qualified children (as outlined in paragraph 1.5 above). Unlike Disability Benefit, the rates of Injury Benefit are not affected by the level of the claimant's earnings.

If a person is getting a Widow/er's Pension, a One-Parent Family Payment or other analogous payment, Injury Benefit can be paid in addition. Injury Benefit is paid at $\frac{1}{2}$ the personal rate in these circumstances and no increase in Injury Benefit is payable in respect of child dependants. In cases where less than the full rate of Widow/er's/One Parent Family payment is being paid, more than half rate Injury Benefit can be payable. In addition, if a person is getting either Blind Person's Pension or Orphan's Pension, Injury Benefit can

also be paid in full for the duration of the illness or 26 weeks, whichever is the shorter.

Taxation of Injury Benefit

3.3.5 Injury Benefit is taxable on the same basis as Disability Benefit.

3.4 Disablement Benefit

3.4.1 Disablement Benefit is paid where an insured person suffers loss of physical or mental faculty as a result of an accident at work or through contracting a prescribed occupational disease. The level of the payment awarded depends on the degree of loss of faculty, which is medically assessed. Assessments of less than 10% are paid by way of a lump sum (known as a Disablement Gratuity), assessments of between 10% and 19% are paid by lump sum or by pension (known as Disablement Pension) and assessments of 20% or more are paid by way of a pension. Disablement Benefit differs fundamentally from other social welfare income support payments in that it is not an income maintenance payment. Accordingly, Disablement Benefit can be paid in addition to other social welfare payments such as DB and IP and can also be paid where a person continues to work.

Loss of Faculty

3.4.2 All claimants for Disablement Benefit must be examined by a Medical Assessor to determine the degree of disablement. This medical assessment is specially designed to determine loss of faculty by comparing the client with a person of their own age and sex in normal health.

Even if the person is not immediately incapacitated as a result of the occupational accident or disease, claimants can safeguard their future right to Disablement Benefit by notifying their employers about the accident or disease and by applying to the DSFA for a declaration that the accident or disease arose out of or in the course of employment.

Duration of Payment

3.4.3 If a person is unable to work as a result of the occupational accident or disease, then Injury Benefit should be claimed for the first 26 weeks. Disablement Benefit is not payable during this 26 week period. However, if a person continues to be able to work following the occupational accident or disease, Disablement Benefit can be paid from the Friday after the 4th day subsequent to the accident or contraction of the prescribed disease.

Rates of Payment

3.4.4 Disablement assessments of less than 20% are normally paid by way of a lump sum Disablement Gratuity. Assessments of 20% or more are paid by way of a weekly or monthly Disablement Pension. The

maximum Disablement Gratuity which is paid for life awards of 19%, is €13,780. Proportionate Disablement Gratuities are paid for assessments of between 1% and 18%. The maximum Disablement Pension, which is paid for awards of 100% is €196.90 a week. Proportionate Disablement Pensions are paid, in 10% bands, for assessments of between 20% and 90%. For life awards of between 10% and 19%, a Disablement Pension can be awarded in lieu of a Disablement Gratuity.

Increases in Disablement Pension

3.4.5 Increases in Disablement Pension can be paid in certain cases –

- If a Disablement Pensioner is permanently incapable of work and does not qualify for DB or IP, an Unemployability Supplement may be payable (see section 3.5 below).
- If an Unemployability Supplement is paid to a Disablement Pensioner, further increases may be paid in respect of a qualified adult and qualified children.
- If a Disablement Pensioner requires constant care and attention, a Constant Attendance Allowance may be payable (see section 3.6 below).

Taxation of Disablement Benefit

3.4.6 Disablement Gratuity payments are exempt from tax. However, income from Disablement Pension is fully taxable.

3.5 Unemployability Supplement

3.5.1 Unemployability Supplement (US) may be paid as an increase in Disablement Pension if a person is permanently incapable of work as a result of an occupational accident or disease and does not qualify for any other social welfare payment, such as Disability Benefit, Invalidity Pension or Disability Allowance.

Duration of Payment

3.5.2 Unemployability Supplement is payable from the date of qualification for Disablement Pension and continues for life, provided the person remains permanently incapable of work as a consequence of the occupational injury or disease.

Rates of Payment

3.5.3 The rate of payment for US is the same as for Disability Benefit (see paragraph 1.5 above). Where a person in receipt of US has qualified dependants, then the Disablement Benefit which that person is receiving, may be increased in respect of those dependants. The rates of increases for qualified adults and qualified children in this case are

the same as those applying under the Disability Benefit scheme. In addition, an allowance of €7.70 a week is payable to a recipient of Unemployability Supplement who is living alone. An allowance of €12.70 is also payable to recipients of Unemployability Supplement who are living on certain offshore islands.

If a person is in receipt of a Widow/er's Pension, a One-Parent Family Payment or other analogous payment, then US can be paid in addition for a period of up to 15 months. US is paid at ½ the personal rate in these circumstances and no increase is payable in respect of child dependants. In addition, if a person is getting either Blind Person's Pension or Orphan's Pension, then US can also be paid in full for the period of incapacity.

Taxation of US

3.5.4 Income from Unemployability Supplement payments is fully taxable.

3.6 Constant Attendance Allowance

3.6.1 Where the degree of disablement is assessed at between 50% and 100% and the person has been certified as being in need of constant care and attention, an increase in the weekly Disablement Pension, known as Constant Attendance Allowance, may be payable.

Duration of Payment

3.6.2 Constant Attendance Allowance continues to be paid for as long as the person requires constant care and attention. However, payment ceases for any period during which the claimant is an in-patient in a hospital or similar institution.

Rate of Payment

3.6.3 Constant Attendance Allowance is payable at a rate of €180.70 a week.

Taxation of Constant Attendance Allowance

3.6.4 Constant Attendance Allowance payments are taxable.

3.7 Death Benefits

3.7.1 If a person dies as a result of an accident at work or as a result of an occupational disease, Death Benefit may be payable to that person's dependants. In addition, Death Benefit may be paid, regardless of the cause of death, if a person was getting Disablement Pension assessed at 50% or more at the time of death. Death Benefits include Widow/er's and Orphan's Pensions and a Funeral Grant. In addition, a Dependant Parent's Pension may be paid where a parent had been wholly or mainly maintained by the deceased. A Dependant Parent's Pension may be paid in respect of each parent and the rate of pension payable depends on whether the deceased was single or married.

Rates of Payment

- 3.7.2 The current weekly rate of Death Benefit Widow/er's Pension is €194.60 for those under 66 years and €197.70 for those aged 66 and over, with increases of €21.60 in respect of each qualified child. The maximum rate of Death Benefit Dependant Parent's Pension is €194.60 (€197.70 for those aged 66 or over) with a reduced pension of €102.80 payable depending on the circumstances. An additional €7.70 a week is paid where the pensioner is aged 66 or over and living alone. Recipients aged 66 or over and who live on certain offshore islands receive an additional payment of €12.70. The weekly rate of Death Benefit Orphan's Pension is €141.80. A Funeral Grant of €635.00 is payable in a lump sum towards the cost of funeral expenses.

Taxation of Death Benefits

- 3.7.3 Death Benefit Pensions for Widows, Widowers, Orphans and Dependant Parents are fully taxable. However, the funeral grant is not taxable.

3.8 Cost of Medical Care

People who are injured at work or who contract a prescribed occupational disease can claim the cost of certain expenses in respect of medical care and attention, which are not already covered by the Health Service Executive or under the Treatment Benefit Scheme operated by the DSFA. These expenses include costs incurred in visiting doctors and on prescriptions, the cost of certain medical appliances and certain dental and optical treatment.

4. CARER'S BENEFIT

Carer's Benefit

- 4.1 Carer's Benefit (CB) is a payment made to insured persons who leave the workforce to care for a person(s) in need of full-time care and attention. [Under Carer's Leave Legislation, a person may be entitled to unpaid temporary leave from his/her employment to provide care to a person(s).]

Qualifying Conditions

- 4.2 A person will qualify if he/she (the carer) –
- is aged 16 or over
 - has been employed (in the state) for the previous three month period
 - satisfies the PRSI contribution conditions
 - gives up employment to care for a person(s) on a full time basis (this employment must have been for a minimum of 17 hours per week or 34 hours per fortnight)

- takes up limited self employment, or is not employed or engaged in training/education outside the home for more than 15 hours per week
- is living in the state
- is not living in a hospital, convalescent home or other similar institution

and

The person(s) being cared for is/are:

- so disabled as to require full-time care and attention (medical certification is required)
- not normally living in a hospital, home or other similar institution
- not already receiving full time care and attention within his/her residence from another person.

Contribution Conditions

4.3 For a first claim the person must have:

- 156 contributions paid since entry into insurable employment
- and**
- (a) 39 contributions paid in the Relevant Tax Year
- or*
- (b) 39 contributions paid in the 12 month period before commencement of the Carer's Benefit
- or*
- (c) 26 contributions paid in the Relevant Tax Year and 26 contributions paid in the Relevant Tax Year prior to that.

PRSI contribution classes A, B, C, D, H and E count.

For second and subsequent claims:

- the person does not need to satisfy the PRSI contribution conditions again.
- The person does not need to satisfy the employment conditions in the three month period prior to commencement of the claim if he/she was in receipt of Carer's Benefit within this three month period.

Duration of Payment

4.4 Carer's Benefit can be paid for a total period of 104 weeks for each person being cared for. This may be claimed as a single continuous period or in separate periods up to a total of 104 weeks and subject to a minimum of 6 weeks for any given period. If more than one person is being cared for the person may receive payment for each care recipient for 104 weeks. This may result in the care periods overlapping or running concurrently.

In the event that the person being cared for dies, Carer's Benefit will continue to be paid for 6 weeks following the person's death. A bereavement grant of €635 may also be payable.

Rates of Payment

- 4.5 The payment is made up of a weekly personal payment for the person and additional amounts for his/her child dependents. Where a person is caring for one person the weekly personal rate of payment is €180.70. If a person is providing care to more than one person he/she may be entitled to an extra 50% of the personal rate (i.e. €271.10 per week). The full rate increase for a qualified child, which is payable when the person is single widowed or separated is €16.80 per week. Where the person is living with his/her spouse/partner a half rate increase (€8.40 per week) may be payable.

Credited contributions (credits) will be awarded automatically for the period in which the person is in receipt of Carer's Benefit. These are awarded at the same rate as the person's last paid contribution.

Recipients of Carer's Benefit automatically receive a Respite Care Grant in respect of each person for whom they are providing full time care and attention. This is an annual payment of €1,200 in respect of each person being cared for.

Taxation of CB

- 4.6 Carer's Benefit is assessable as income for tax purposes.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS

5. DISABILITY ALLOWANCE (FORMERLY DPMA)

Disability Allowance

- 5.1 Disability Allowance (DA) is a means-tested payment which is administered by DSFA and paid to people between the ages of 16 and 66 years who, by virtue of a specified disability, are substantially disadvantaged in undertaking work which would otherwise be suitable, having regard to the person's age, experience and qualifications. A specified disability is defined in regulations to mean an injury, disease, congenital deformity or physical or mental illness or defect, which has continued or may be expected to continue for at least one year. Unlike other social welfare payments, entitlement to Disability Allowance can be affected by the person's residency in an institution. However, since August, 1999, existing recipients of Disability Allowance who are living at home and who move into residential settings are entitled to retain their DA payments.

Proof of Substantial Disablement in Undertaking Employment

- 5.2 This is normally done through the submission of medical reports from the claimant's doctor, with supporting consultants' reports, where necessary. The claimant may also be required to attend for a medical examination by a Medical Assessor of the DSFA.

Duration of Payment

- 5.3 Disability Allowance continues to be paid up to the age of 66 years, as long as the person continues to satisfy the qualifying conditions.

Rates of Payment

- 5.4 The rate of payment depends on the claimant's family size, circumstances and means. The current maximum rates of Disability Allowance are the same as the maximum weekly rates of Disability Benefit, outlined in paragraph 1.5 above. An additional allowance of €7.70 is payable to recipients of Disability Allowance who are living alone. An allowance of €12.70 is also payable to recipients of Disability Allowance who are living on certain offshore islands.

Taxation of DA

- 5.5 Disability Allowance is not taxable.

6. DISABILITY ALLOWANCE (PERSONAL EXPENSES RATE)

- 6.1 **Disability Allowance (Personal Expenses Rate)**
Disability Allowance (Personal Expenses Rate) was introduced with effect from June 2005 and replaced the former spending allowances paid by the Health Services Executive to people in residential care who are not eligible for Disability Allowance, by virtue of this residency. Since August 1999, existing recipients of Disability Allowance who are living at home and who move into residential settings are entitled to retain their Disability Allowance.
- 6.2 **Proof of Substantial Disablement in Undertaking Employment**
Requirement is for short certification only by an Area Medical Officer of the Health Services Executive or General Practitioner attached to each residential location, confirming that the person would have medically qualified for Disability Allowance but for the existence of the residential disqualification. This certification outlines the diagnosis and when the condition commenced.
- 6.3 **Duration of Payment**
Disability Allowance (Personal Expenses Rate) continues to be paid up to age 66 years, subject to the person continuing to satisfy the qualifying conditions.
- 6.4 **Rates of Payment**
The rate of payment for Disability Allowance (Personal Expenses Rate) is €35 per week.
- 6.5 **Taxation of DA (PER)**
Disability Allowance (Personal Expenses Rate) is not taxable

7. BLIND PERSON'S PENSION

Blind Person's Pension

- 7.1 This is a means-tested pension which is administered by DSFA and payable to blind or partially sighted people who are 18 years and over and are so blind that they cannot perform work for which eyesight is essential or cannot continue in their ordinary occupation.

Proof of Blindness

- 7.2 Registration with the National Council for the Blind (NCBI) is usually accepted as satisfying the blindness condition. Where a person is not registered with the NCBI, they are required to submit a medical report from an ophthalmic surgeon or from an optometrist.

Duration of Payment

- 7.3 Blind Person's Pension continues to be paid for as long as the claimant satisfies the qualifying conditions. However, Blind Person's Pension ceases if the person is awarded certain other social welfare pensions, e.g. Old Age (Contributory), Retirement or Invalidity Pension.

Rates of Payment

- 7.4 The rates of payment depend on the claimant's family size, circumstances and means. The current maximum personal rate is €165.80 in the case of a person under 66 years of age and €182.00 where the person is aged 66 and over. A weekly increase of €110.00 may be payable in respect of a qualified adult under age 66 and €120.30 per week where the qualified adult is age 66 or over. €16.80 is payable in respect of each qualified child. Where a claimant's spouse or partner is not a qualified adult, any increases in respect of qualified children are generally payable at half-rate. Additional allowances of €7.70 and €10.00, respectively are payable to Blind Pensioners who are living alone and pensioners aged 80 or over. An allowance of €12.70 is also payable to Blind Pensioners who live on certain offshore islands. A Blind Pensioner under age 66 may also be entitled to receive any one of the following payments in full provided they satisfy the relevant qualifying conditions; Disability Benefit, Unemployment Benefit, Maternity Benefit, Adoptive Benefit, Health and Safety Benefit, Injury Benefit, Widow/er's Contributory Pension, Widow/er's Non-Contributory Pension or One-Parent Family Payment.

Taxation of Blind Person's Pension

- 7.5 Blind Person's Pension is fully taxable.

8. CARER'S ALLOWANCE

Carer's Allowance

- 8.1 Carer's Allowance (CA) is a payment for carers who look after certain people in need of full-time care and attention.

Qualifying Conditions

- 8.2 A person will qualify if he/she (the carer):
- is aged 18 or over;
 - satisfies a means test;
 - lives with the person he/she is looking after or can be contacted quickly by a direct system of communication (for example telephone or alarm) between his/her home and the home of the person he/she is caring for;
 - cares for the person on a full-time basis;
 - takes up limited self-employment, or is not employed or engaged in training/education outside the home for more than 15 hours a week;
 - satisfies the Habitual Residence Condition; and
 - does not live in a hospital, convalescent home or other similar institution.

In addition, the person being cared for must:

- be so disabled as to need full-time care and attention (medical certification is required);
- not normally live in a hospital, home or other similar institution; and
- be aged 16 or over (or aged under 16 if Domiciliary Care Allowance is being paid for them by the Health Service Executive);
- not already be receiving full time care and attention within their own home from another person.

Duration of Payment

- 8.3 The payment will continue as long as the person continues to satisfy the qualifying conditions. In the event that the person being cared for dies, Carer's Allowance will continue to be paid for 6 weeks following the person's death. A bereavement grant of €635 may also be payable.

Rates of Payment

- 8.4 The payment is made up of a personal rate and additional amounts for the person's child dependant(s). The level of payment depends on the person's means. The current maximum rate of payment is €180 per week where the carer is looking after one person or €270 per week where the carer is looking after more than one person. Carers aged over 66 receive an additional €20 per week when caring for one person or €30 per week when caring for more than one person. Recipients of

Carer's Allowance aged over 80 receive a further €10 per week. An increase of €16.80 per week may be payable in respect of each qualified child where the recipient is single, widowed or separated. Where the person is living with his/her spouse or partner the increase which may be payable in respect of each qualified child is €8.40 per week. There is an increase of €12.70 per week for recipients of Carer's Allowance aged 66 or over who live on certain offshore islands.

Recipients of Carer's Allowance automatically receive a Respite Care Grant in respect of each person for whom they are providing full time care and attention. This is an annual payment of €1,200 in respect of each person being cared for. Recipients of the Carer's Allowance may also qualify for a Free Travel Pass; Electricity, Natural Gas or Bottled Gas Refill Allowance; a Free Television Licence; and a Telephone Allowance.

Recipients of Carer's Allowance may be awarded credited contributions (credits) for the period of caring. However, recipients who are not eligible for credits he/she may qualify to have "homemaking years" taken into account for Old Age Contributory Pension purposes.

Taxation of CA

- 8.5 Income from Carer's Allowance is regarded as income for tax purposes.

9. RESPITE CARE GRANT

Respite Care Grant

- 9.1 The Respite Care Grant (RCG) is an annual payment for carers who look after certain people in need of full-time care and attention. The payment is made regardless of the carer's means but is subject to certain conditions.

Qualifying Conditions

- 9.2 A person will qualify if he/she (the carer):
- is aged 16 or over;
 - is ordinarily resident in the state;
 - expects to care for the person on a full-time basis;
 - cares for the person for at least six months – this period of care must include the first Thursday in June;
 - lives with the person he/she is looking after or can be contacted quickly by a direct system of communication (for example telephone or alarm) between his/her home and the home of the person he/she is caring for;
 - is not working outside the home for more than 15 hours per week;
 - is not getting or entitled to Unemployment Benefit or Unemployment Assistance or signing for Unemployment Credits;
 - is not living in a hospital, convalescent home or similar institution.

In addition, the person being cared for must:

- be so disabled as to need full-time care and attention (medical certification is required);
- not normally live in a hospital, home or other similar institution; and
- not receive full-time care and attention within their home from another person.

Duration of Payment

- 9.3 The payment is made once a year (in June).

Rates of Payment

- 9.4 From June 2006 the Respite Care Grant is €1,200 for each person the recipient is caring for.

10. SUPPLEMENTARY WELFARE ALLOWANCE

Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA)

10.1 The supplementary welfare allowance scheme is administered by the Health Service Executive (HSE), under the general direction and control of the Minister for Social and Family Affairs. The scheme is the 'safety net' within the overall social welfare system in that it can, subject to conditions, provide assistance to persons in the State whose means are insufficient to meet their needs and/or those of their dependents. The scheme is made up of a number of component parts:

- basic weekly payments,
- rent and mortgage interest supplements,
- diet supplements,
- other supplements,
- exceptional needs payments and
- urgent needs payments.

SWA is not normally paid to persons in full-time employment, full-time education or who are directly involved in trade disputes.

While not specifically targeted at people who are sick or people with disabilities, the SWA scheme can nevertheless provide income support for those who are short-term ill and who do not qualify for DB or Invalidity Pension. In addition, SWA can be paid pending the payment of other social welfare payments, such as DB, IP, DA etc.

In addition the HSE also administer the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance scheme in parallel with the SWA scheme. The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance (BSCFA) scheme provides a one-off payment to eligible families to assist with the extra costs when their children start school each autumn.

Proof of Illness

10.2 Medical certificates from the claimant's doctor confirming incapacity must be submitted on a regular basis to the Community Welfare Officer.

Duration of Payment

10.3 Payment of SWA can continue for as long as the claimant continues to fulfill the conditions for the scheme.

Rates of Payment

10.4 The rates of payment depend on the claimant's family size, circumstances and means. The current maximum personal payment

is €165.80 per week, with increases of €110.00 for a qualified adult and €16.80 for each qualified child.

Taxation of SWA

- 10.5 All payments under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme, whether by way of basic SWA payments, rent and mortgage supplements, exceptional needs payments etc. are not subject to income tax.

11. INFECTIOUS DISEASES MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

Infectious Diseases Maintenance Allowance

- 11.1 The Infectious Diseases Maintenance Allowance (IDMA) is a means-tested payment which is available from the Health Service Executive (HSE) for people aged 16 years and over and who are unable to make reasonable and proper provision for their own maintenance or the maintenance of their dependants because they are undergoing treatment for a specified infectious disease.

Proof of Infectious Disease

- 11.2 Notification from the claimant's doctor confirming that the claimant has a specified infectious disease is required.

Duration of Payment

- 11.3 The Infectious Diseases Maintenance Allowance continues to be paid for as long as claimants are undergoing treatment to the satisfaction of the HSE and are thereby prevented from making reasonable and proper provision for their own maintenance and the maintenance of their dependants. It is also available to carriers of infectious diseases who, through taking precautions against the spread of infection, are rendered incapable of carrying out their ordinary occupation and are therefore, unable to make reasonable and proper provision for their own maintenance and the maintenance of their dependants. However, this Allowance ceases if the person is awarded another social welfare payment, e.g. Old Age Pension at 66 years of age.

Rates of Payment

- 11.4 The rate of payment of the IDMA depends on the claimant's family size, circumstances, means and whether the claimant or the spouse is receiving in-patient services. The current maximum personal rate is €165.80, with an increase of €110.00 paid in respect of a qualified adult and €16.80 in respect of each qualified child under 16 years. €64.50 is paid in respect of a dependant (other than a spouse) aged 16 and over. Additional increases may be paid in certain cases where a helper is employed to take care of dependants or towards housing costs.

Taxation of Infectious Diseases Maintenance Allowance

11.5 The Infectious Diseases Maintenance Allowance is fully taxable.

12. BLIND WELFARE ALLOWANCE

Blind Welfare Allowance

- 12.1 This is a means-tested payment available from the Health Service Executive (HSE) to provide supplementary financial support to unemployed blind or visually impaired persons aged 16 years and over receiving certain social welfare payments, e.g. Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension, Blind Person's Pension, Old Age (Non-Contributory) Pension or Disability Benefit or an equivalent payment from another country. The HSE operates this scheme in conjunction with the National Council for the Blind of Ireland. The allowance is not paid to people in full-time residential care.

Proof of Blindness

- 12.2 Registration with the National Council for the Blind is usually accepted as satisfying the blindness condition. Where a person is not registered with the National Council for the Blind, they are required to submit a medical report from an ophthalmic surgeon.

Duration of Payment

- 12.3 The Blind Welfare Allowance continues for as long as the claimant satisfies the qualifying conditions.

Rates of Payment

- 12.4 The rate of allowance depends on the claimant's family size, circumstances and means. A supplementary allowance of €6.20 a week is payable in addition to Disability Allowance to blind people over 16 years and under 18 years in respect of a qualified adult, while €3.90 a week is payable in respect of each qualified child. A supplementary allowance of €51.60 a week is payable in addition to a Blind Person's Pension, Disability Benefit, Invalidity Pension, Disability Allowance etc., in the case of a blind pensioner aged 18 and over, €103.20 is payable in the case of a blind couple and €4.40 is payable in respect of each qualified child.

Taxation of Blind Welfare Allowance

- 12.5 The Blind Welfare Allowance is fully taxable.

CURRENT ORGANISATIONAL TARGETS

Activity	Standards	Claim Volume
State (Old Age) Contributory Pension	55% in 6 weeks	14,000
State (Old Age) Non-Contributory Pension	65% in 8 weeks	11,500
Retirement Pension	80% in 5 weeks	14,000
Blind Person's Pension	65% in 8 weeks	220
Disability Allowance	70% in 9 weeks	12,000
Carers Allowance	70% in 9 weeks	6,000
Disability Benefit	90% in 1 week	200,000
Invalidity Pension	70% in 9 weeks	7,500
Occupational Injury Benefit	80% in 4 weeks	18,000
Child Benefit	90% in 1 week	168,000
Free Electricity/Gas Allowance	70% in 7 weeks	39,000
Free Telephone Allowance	70% in 7 weeks	49,000
Free Travel - New Pass	90% in 4 weeks	16,000
Unemployment Benefit	85% in 2 weeks	120,000
Unemployment Assistance	70% in 2 weeks	120,000
Treatment Benefit	90% in 2 weeks	684,000
Widow/er's Contributory Pension	80% in 5 weeks	8,500
Widow/er's Non-Contributory Pension	75% in 8 weeks	1,300
One-Parent Family Payment	55% in 8 weeks	13,560

Activity	Standards
Telephone Service	90% of calls to be answered within 10 seconds
Replies to Public Representatives	80% within 3 working weeks
Issue of Contribution Records to members of public	60% in 5 days
Issue of claim arrears payments	80% within 3 weeks of claim being put in payment
Customer Satisfaction	90% overall satisfaction with service delivery