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Qualifying conditions for our schemes change from time to time. Always check with your local Social Welfare Office or with Information Services to see if qualifying conditions have changed (see page 11 for contact details).

The information in this booklet is correct at the time of publication. This booklet is intended as a guide only, and is not a legal interpretation.

1. What is Treatment Benefit?

Treatment Benefit is a scheme that may allow you to qualify for:

- Dental Benefit
- Optical Benefit
- contact lenses (on medical grounds)
- hearing aids.

Dental Benefit

Dental Benefit covers dental examination and diagnosis.

Note

You may receive Dental Benefit for examinations carried out in other European Union (EU) member states. Contact Treatment Benefit Section before you travel for an application form and details of the amounts the Department will pay.

Optical Benefit

Optical Benefit covers an eye examination only*.

*The Department does not pay towards the cost of an eye examination for visual display units (VDU), such as computers or for driving licences.

Note

You may receive Optical Benefit for eye examinations carried out in other EU member states. Contact Treatment Benefit Section before you travel for an application form and details of the amounts the Department will pay.

Contact Lenses

If you need contact lenses on medical grounds, the Department will pay up to half the cost, subject to a fixed maximum contribution, provided you have a doctor's recommendation.

Note

You may receive benefit for contact lenses bought in other EU member states, provided the lenses are needed on medical grounds. Contact Treatment Benefit Section before you travel for an application form and details of the amounts the Department will pay.

Hearing Aids

The Department will pay up to half the cost of a hearing aid or repairs to a hearing aid, subject to a fixed maximum contribution.

Note

You may receive benefit for hearing aid(s) supplied in other EU member states. Contact Treatment Benefit Section before you travel for an application form and details of the amounts the Department will pay.

2. How do I qualify?

To qualify for Treatment Benefit you must satisfy the PRSI conditions. Only PRSI at Classes **A**, **E**, **H** and **P** count.

If you are:	You must have at least:
Under Age 21	39 paid PRSI contributions since first starting work.
Aged 21 to 24	39 paid PRSI contributions since first starting work, and either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 paid or credited PRSI contributions* in the relevant tax year on which your claim is based, or, • 26 paid PRSI contributions in both the relevant tax year and the tax year immediately before the relevant tax year.
Aged 25 to 65	260 paid PRSI contributions since first starting work, and either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 paid or credited PRSI contributions* in the relevant tax year on which your claim is based, or, • 26 paid PRSI contributions in both the relevant tax year and the tax year immediately before the relevant tax year.
Aged 66 or over	See page 7.

* At least 13 of these weeks must be **paid** contributions. However, if you do not have 13 paid contributions in the relevant tax year, you may use the following years instead:

— either of the two previous tax years

or

— any tax year after the relevant tax year.

The 13 weeks paid contributions does not apply if you:

- reached age 66 before 6 July 1992,
- are aged 55 or over and receiving ‘unemployment credits’,
- are getting any of the following Social Welfare payments:
 - Invalidity Pension,
 - Carer’s Allowance,
 - Carer’s Benefit,
 - State Pension (Transition),
 - Illness Benefit (for 12 months or more),
 - a combination of Jobseeker’s Benefit and Jobseeker’s Allowance (for 12 months or more),
 - long-term Jobseeker’s Allowance, or
 - Pre-Retirement Allowance,
- are on a Community Employment Scheme, Back to Work Scheme, Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme or Community Employment Development Programme.

For Claims Made In:	The Relevant Tax Year Is:
2010	➔ 2008
2011	➔ 2009
2012	➔ 2010

Note

If you satisfy the PRSI conditions when you reach age 60, you will remain qualified for life.

Aged 66 or over, the PRSI contribution requirements vary according to when you reached age 66.

If you reached: age 66	You must have at least:
<p>before 1 October 1987</p>	<p>156 paid PRSI contributions since first starting work and 26 paid or credited PRSI contributions in either of the 2 relevant tax years on which your claim is based.</p>
<p>between 1 October 1987 and 6 July 1992</p>	<p>208 paid PRSI contributions since first starting work and 39 paid or credited PRSI contributions in either of the 2 relevant tax years on which your claim is based.</p>
<p>between 6 July 1992 and 28 May 2006</p>	<p>260 paid PRSI contributions since first starting work, and 39 paid or credited* PRSI contributions in either of the two relevant tax years on which your claim is based.</p>
<p>If you reach age 66 on or after 29 May 2006</p>	<p>260 paid PRSI contributions since first starting work, and either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 paid or credited PRSI contributions* in either of the two relevant tax years on which your claim is based, or, • 26 paid PRSI contributions in both the relevant tax year and the tax year immediately before the relevant tax year.

Note

If you satisfy the PRSI conditions when you reach 66 years of age, you will remain qualified for life.

3. Does social insurance outside Ireland count?

Treatment Benefit and EC Regulations

If you do not qualify for Treatment Benefit on your Irish social insurance record, but you worked and made social contributions within the European Economic Area (EEA) you may use your social insurance record in that country to help you qualify, provided you have paid at least one PRSI contribution at **Class A, E, H** or **P** since you returned to Ireland.

Countries covered are:

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Republic of Cyprus (Cyprus South)
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- the Netherlands
- the United Kingdom(Bilateral Agreement for the Channel Islands and the the Isle of Man).

EU Member States

The following are the **EU Member States**, where you can be treated and receive payment under the Treatment Benefit scheme:

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Greece
- Hungary
- Italy
- Republic of Cyprus (Cyprus South)
- Slovakia

- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- the Netherlands
- the United Kingdom

Note

You should contact Treatment Benefit Section before you travel for an application form and details of the amounts the Department will pay.

4. Am I entitled to Treatment Benefit on my spouse's or partner's social insurance record?

You can get Treatment Benefit on your spouse's or partner's PRSI record provided they satisfy the qualifying contribution conditions and you are dependent on your spouse or partner.

To be dependent on your spouse or partner, you:

- have a gross income of €100 or less per week,
- earn more than €100 per week and were dependent on your spouse or partner before entering or resuming insurable employment at **Class A, E, H or P**,
- are **not** getting a social welfare payment (except Disablement Pension, Supplementary Welfare Allowance, Carer's Benefit or Child Benefit),
- are getting Carer's Allowance or the State Pension (Non-Contributory) in your own right and were dependent on your spouse or partner immediately prior to getting the Allowance or Pension.

5. Can I qualify for Treatment Benefit as a widow or widower?

If you were entitled to Treatment Benefit on your spouse's or partner's insurance record at the time of their death, you will continue to be entitled for as long as you remain widowed.

If you are working, you may qualify for Treatment Benefit on your own PRSI contribution record provided you satisfy the PRSI qualifying conditions.

6. How do I apply for Treatment Benefit?

You must apply to the Department for approval by completing the appropriate application form(s).

Type of treatment:	Application form:	Available from:
• Dental Benefit	• applicant D1 • qualified adult D2	Dental Surgery only
• Optical Benefit	• applicant O1 • qualified adult O2	Opticians or Treatment Benefit Section
• Hearing aids or contact lenses*	• applicant MA1 • qualified adult MA2	Suppliers or Treatment Benefit Section

* On medical grounds

If you wish to avail of treatment in another EU member state, please contact Treatment Benefit Section before you travel for an application form and details of the amounts the Department will pay.

7. Where can I get more information?

For more information on the Treatment Benefit Scheme, contact your local Social Welfare Office or:

Treatment Benefit Section

Social Welfare Services
Department of Social Protection
St. Oliver Plunkett Road
Letterkenny
Co. Donegal

LoCall: 1890 400 400 (from the Republic of Ireland only)

Telephone: +353 74 9164480 (from Northern Ireland or overseas)

For information booklets, application forms and more information on social welfare services:

- Log on to **www.welfare.ie**.
- Text to **51909** (see details on Page 12).
- LoCall Information Line at **1890 66 22 44** (from the Republic of Ireland only) or **+353 71 91 93313** (from Northern Ireland or overseas).
- Drop in to your local Social Welfare Office or Citizens Information Centre.

Note

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

To request forms, text the form code followed by your name and address to 51909 (from the Republic of Ireland only). Standard text rates apply.

For example, if you wanted to request the Bereavement Grant form, text FORM BG MARY MURPHY 1 NEW STREET, OLD TOWN, CO. DONEGAL.

Social welfare payment or scheme	Form code
Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance	FORM BTSCFA
Bereavement Grant	FORM BG
Carer's Allowance	FORM CARA
Carer's Benefit	FORM CARB
Child Benefit (Form CB1)	FORM CHILD
Disability Allowance	FORM DA
Domiciliary Care Allowance	FORM DCA
Family Income Supplement	FORM FIS
Free Travel	FORM TRAVEL
Fuel Allowance	FORM FUEL
Household Benefits	FORM HHB
Invalidity Pension	FORM INV
Living Alone Increase	FORM LAA
Maternity Benefit	FORM MAT
One Parent Family Payment	FORM OPFP
Respite Care Grant	FORM RCG
State Pension (Non-Contributory)	FORM SPNC
State Pension (Transition/Contributory)	FORM SPC
Widow(er)'s/Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory Pension	FORM WCP
Widow(er)'s/Surviving Civil Partner's Non-Contributory Pension	FORM WNCP

Citizens Information

The Citizens Information Board is the statutory body which supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on the broad range of social and civil services to the public. It provides the Citizens Information website and supports the voluntary network of Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service.

www.citizensinformation.ie

Lo-Call 1890 777 121 (Mon-Fri 9am-9pm)

Local Centres (see Golden Pages)

Citizen Information is available from over 250 locations nationwide. The contact details and opening hours of your nearest Citizens Information Centre are listed in the Golden Pages.