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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 16 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.

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1. What is Carer's Benefit?

Carer's Benefit is a payment for insured people who have recently left the workforce and are looking after certain people in need of full-time care and attention.

You can get Carer's Benefit for a total of 2 years for each person you are caring for. You can claim it for a continuous period of 2 years or in separate periods adding up to 2 years. If you provide care to more than one person, you may be entitled to an extra 50% of your personal payment.

Note

You should apply for Carer's Benefit 10 weeks before you intend to leave employment so we have enough time to check if you qualify and deal with your claim.

If you leave the workforce to care for a person in need of full-time care and attention, you may be entitled to unpaid temporary leave from your employment. See page 14 for more information.

Carer's Allowance is a **means tested payment** for people who are looking after certain people. Since 27th September 2007 if you are getting certain payment(s) from this Department and you satisfy the conditions for Carer's Allowance, you may get half the rate of Carer's Allowance along with your existing payments. It **may** also be possible for you to receive half rate Carer's Allowance in addition to someone receiving an increase for you as a qualified adult on their own social welfare payment. For more information, log on to **www.welfare.ie**.

Note

Carer's Benefit is not payable at half rate with another Social welfare payment.

2. How do I qualify?

You will qualify if you, the carer:

- have been employed for 8 weeks during the previous 26 weeks,
- have enough PRSI contributions,
- give up employment to care for somebody full-time (this employment must have been for at least 16 hours a week or 32 hours a fortnight),
- are not self-employed or employed outside the home for more than 15 hours a week (see page 6), and
- are not living in a hospital, convalescent home or other similar institution.

The person you are caring for must:

- need full-time care and attention (a medical certificate is required), and
- not normally live in a hospital, home or other similar institution.

If you are caring for a child on Domiciliary Care Allowance from the Health Service Executive, you do not need to supply a medical certificate or be the person who receives that allowance on the child's behalf.

Note

If two or more people are sharing caring duties, only one carer can claim the benefit.

3. What are the PRSI contribution conditions?

For a first claim you must have:

- 156 paid contributions since entry into insurable employment,

and

- 39 paid contributions in the relevant tax year,

or

- 39 paid contributions in the 12 months before Carer's Benefit starts,

or

- 26 paid contributions in the relevant tax year and 26 paid contributions in the tax year before that.

Only Class A, B, C, D, H and E PRSI contributions count.

The 'relevant tax year' is the second last complete tax year before the year in which you claim Carer's Benefit.

For claims made in:	The relevant tax year is:
2010	2008
2011	2009
2012	2010

Insurance contributions from other EU member states

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

You do not need to satisfy the PRSI contribution conditions again if you apply a second or later time.

Note

- If you do not satisfy the PRSI contribution conditions for Carer's Benefit, you may qualify for a Carer's Allowance based on a means test. For more information, log on to www.welfare.ie.
- If you do not qualify for Carer's Benefit, you may still be entitled to carer's leave from your employment. See page 14 for details.

4. What does 'full-time care and attention' mean?

The person being cared for must need:

- continuous supervision and frequent help throughout the day with their normal personal needs, such as walking and getting about, eating or drinking, washing, bathing, dressing and so on,
- or**
- continuous supervision to avoid danger to themselves.

Note

The person being cared for may attend a non-residential course of rehabilitation training or a day care centre approved by the Ministers for Health and Children.

You, the carer, may:

- attend an educational or training course to take up voluntary or community work for up to 15 hours a week,
- or**

- take up limited employment outside your home, approved by the Department, for up to 15 hours a week,
- or**
- engage in limited self-employment in your home.

Your earnings from limited employment or self-employment cannot exceed a weekly limit set by the Department. Please contact Carer's Benefit Section for details of this limit.

During your absence, you must arrange adequate care for the person needing full-time care and attention.

The Department will be flexible in assessing the need to provide full-time care and attention and will consider the needs of the carer and the person needing care. We do not expect, nor want others to expect, that a carer would provide care 24 hours a day.

5. Do I need to live with the person needing full-time care?

Normally you will be living with the person needing full-time care, but it is not essential for qualifying for the payment. If you are not living with the person for whom you are caring, you must:

- be providing full-time care and attention,
- have a direct system of communication - such as a telephone or alarm system - between your home and that of the person receiving care, and
- be the only person to care for that person in their own home.

6. How much can I get?

Your payment is made up of a weekly personal amount for yourself and extra amounts for any qualified children. For more information, log on to **www.welfare.ie**. If you are providing care to more than one person, you may be entitled to an extra 50% of the personal portion of your payment.

If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant is receiving a payment from this Department that includes an increase for you as a qualified adult, they will no longer be able to claim this increase.

Taxation

Your weekly Carer's Benefit is considered as income for tax purposes. The payment is not taxed before you get it, so you should include it when settling your tax affairs directly with Revenue. If you have any questions about income tax, you should contact your local tax office.

7. Who is a qualified child?

You can claim an increase for a qualified child if they are under age 18, normally live with you and are maintained by you.

If a qualified child is in full-time education by day at a recognised school or college, you may get this increase until the end of the academic year in which they reach age 22 (whether or not they are living at home).

You may get the full Qualified Child Increase if you are single, widowed, a surviving civil partner or separated. You may get half the Qualified Child Increase if you are living with your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant. If your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant is getting a payment from this Department, you will each get half the Qualified Child Increase with your payments.

8. How do I get my payment?

You may get Carer's Benefit by direct payment into your account in a financial institution. This account must be a current or deposit savings account, **not** a mortgage account,

9. How long does payment last?

You can get Carer's Benefit for up to 2 years for **each** person being cared for. You may get this in a single period or in separate periods adding up to 2 years. Because you get the payment for each person being cared for, some care periods may overlap.

There is no minimum period for claiming Carer's Benefit. However, if you claim Carer's Benefit for less than 6 weeks for a person you are caring for, you cannot claim it for the same person again until 6 weeks have passed.

Death of the person being cared for

If the person you are caring for dies within the 2 year period, you will continue to get Carer's Benefit for 6 weeks after their death.

You may also get a Bereavement Grant. You can get more information on this from your local Social Welfare Office or by phoning:

LoCall: 1890 927 770 (from the Republic of Ireland only)

Telephone: + 353 43 3340000 (from Northern Ireland or overseas)

10. Can I get any other payments with Carer's Benefit?

You will get a Respite Care Grant on the first Thursday in June each year for each person you care for. There is no need to apply for the Respite Care Grant if you qualify for Carer's Benefit, as it will be paid to you automatically. For more information, log on to **www.welfare.ie**.

11. When and how do I apply?

You should apply for Carer's Benefit 10 weeks before you intend to leave employment so we have enough time to check if you qualify and deal with your claim.

To apply, complete the application form, **CARB 1**, and send it to the address below:

Carer's Benefit Section

Social Welfare Services
Government Buildings
Ballinalee Road
Longford

LoCall: 1890 927 770 (from the Republic of Ireland only)

Telephone: + 353 43 3340000 (from Northern Ireland or overseas)

Note

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

12. How do I fill in the Carer's Benefit application form?

Before filling in the application form, please take a little time to read this section.

When we deal with an application for Carer's Benefit, we may have to assess the position of up to 3 people (the carer, their spouse, civil partner or cohabitant and the person being cared for).

We have to work out if you qualify for Carer's Benefit on your Social Insurance Record.

We must also examine the medical condition of the person being cared for to decide if they need full-time care and attention.

In addition, we must be satisfied that you, the carer, are providing full-time care and attention and are able to do so.

This means that the application form must ask for a lot of detailed information from you.

Before you begin filling in the application form and send it to us, you should read carefully and follow the instructions at the front of the form. You should read the checklist on **part 9** of the form carefully to make sure you have completed all the questions and have all the necessary certificates and documents.

Application for a second person being cared for

If you already get Carer's Benefit and are now applying for a higher allowance because you are caring for a second person, you **do not** need to send in certificates again. In this case, complete the application form in full and write clearly across the top of the application form, "**Application for a second person - no certificates attached**".

The application form is divided into the following parts.

Part 1 deals with your personal details. Please sign the declaration when the form is completed.

If your circumstances change after you have been awarded Carer's Benefit, you must report this at once to us in the Department.

Part 2 deals with your work and claim details.

Part 3 lists the two possible payment options for Carer's Benefit.

Part 4 deals with your work details and must be completed and stamped by your most recent or current employer.

Part 5 deals with your qualified children(s) details.

Part 6 deals with your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant details.

Part 7 deals with your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant work and claim details including their means.

Part 8 covers details of the person or people you are caring for.

Part 9 is the checklist you should refer to before submitting your application.

Note

If you care for more than 2 people, please let us know as you may receive a Respite Care Grant for them. You should fill in the CARB 2 form and send it to the address on page 10. You can get a CARB 2 form at www.welfare.ie or from your local social welfare office.

Part 10 deals with the medical certification for the person or people being cared for. If you are caring for a person under age 16 and are getting Domiciliary Care Allowance, you do not need to send a medical report at this stage.

Remember to include all relevant certificates and documents with your application.

13. Can I apply for Carer's Benefit if I have already started caring?

Yes, an application for Carer's Benefit can be backdated for up to eight weeks after you have started caring. However, it may be backdated further in certain situations, for example:

- if you failed to apply because you received incorrect or insufficient information from this Department,
- if the delay in applying was due to a 'force majeure', an event that made it impossible for you to apply on time, or
- if the delay occurred because you were sick.

Note:

We cannot backdate Carer's Benefit because you were not aware of the payment when you started caring duties.

14. Can I appeal against a decision?

If you do not agree with a decision on your application, you may appeal against it. Any appeal must be made in writing within 21 days of the date of the decision, stating clearly the reason for your appeal.

You can send your appeal to:

Social Welfare Appeals Office

D'Olier House
D'Olier Street
Dublin 2

LoCall: 1890 74 74 34 (from the Republic of Ireland only)
Telephone: + 353 1 6732800 (from Northern Ireland or overseas)

15. What happens when I have given up work to provide full-time care and attention?

By law, you may be entitled to temporary unpaid leave from your employment to provide full-time care and attention to another person.

For information contact:

National Employment Rights Authority

Government Buildings,
O'Brien Road,
Carlow.

LoCall: 1890 80 80 90 (from the Republic of Ireland only)
+ 353 59 91 78990 (from Northern Ireland or overseas)

For more information on the law on carer's leave, log onto **www.employmentrights.ie**.

Carer's leave credits

You will get credited PRSI contributions ('credits') automatically for the period you are getting Carer's Benefit or on carer's leave. Credits are awarded at the same rate as your last paid PRSI contribution.

These credits help protect your future social welfare payments.

Note:

If you avail of carer's leave only, please have your employer complete the application form for carer's leave credits at the back of this booklet after you return to work.

If you take up carer's leave but do not get Carer's Benefit, you will still be entitled to receive carer's leave credits for each week's leave for up to 2 years. This will make sure that your existing cover for social welfare is fully maintained.

You should then send the completed form to:

Department of Social Protection

Client Eligibility Services

Short Term Value Stream

Inner Relief Road

Ardarvan

Buncrana

Co. Donegal

Ireland

Credits will be awarded for your unpaid leave and your social insurance record will be updated.

16. Where can I get more information?

For more information on **Carer's Benefit**, contact your local **Social Welfare Office** or **Carer's Benefit Section** at the address on page 10.

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 17).
- 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.

Other useful booklets:

Bereavement Grant	SW 47
Carer's Allowance	SW 41
Rates of Payment booklet	SW 19
Respite Care Grant	SW113

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 777121 (Mon-Fri 9am-9pm)

Local Centres (see Golden Pages)

Citizens 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.

Application form for carer's leave credits

Employee's name:

Employee's address:

Employee's telephone no:

To be completed by your employer on your return to work

PPS No:

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I/We certify that the above named employee has taken carer's leave as follows:

From:

To:

Total no. of weeks:

Signed by or for employer:

Name:

(not block letters)

Position in company or organisation:

Employer's Registered No:

Employer's telephone no:

Employer's Official Stamp:

Date:

Send this completed form to:

Department of Social Protection

Government Buildings,
Client Eligibility Services,
Inner Relief Road, Buncrana,
Co. Donegal.