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continued overleaf

11/07

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 12 for contact details).

The information in this booklet is correct at the time of going to print.

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This booklet is intended as a guide to the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme. It outlines the four types of payment available under that scheme. The scheme is administered by the Health Service Executive, through the Community Welfare Officers, at local offices of the Health Service Executive on behalf of the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

1. What is Supplementary Welfare Allowance?

Supplementary Welfare Allowance provides a basic weekly allowance as a right to eligible people who have little or no income.

People with low incomes may also qualify for a weekly supplement under the Scheme to meet certain special needs. In addition, payments can also be made in respect of urgent or exceptional needs.

2. What types of Payments are made under the Scheme?

Basic Payments

If you have no income you may be entitled to basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance. If your weekly income is below the Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate for your family size, a payment may be made to bring your income up to the appropriate Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate.

If you have claimed a social welfare payment but it has not yet been paid, and you have no other income, you may qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance while you are awaiting payment.

Supplements

If your income, whether from basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance or otherwise, is too low to meet certain special needs, you may be granted a weekly supplement. Special needs may include:

- rent or mortgage interest payments
- exceptional heating expenses due to ill-health - you will be required to get a letter from your doctor before a supplement for special heating needs will be granted
- a prescribed special diet as a result of a specified medical condition. In most cases, it must be prescribed by a hospital consultant or a hospital registrar. However, some diets may be prescribed by a G.P.

The amount of any supplement will be decided by the Health Service Executive based on your circumstances.

Exceptional Needs Payments

You may be paid an Exceptional Needs Payment to assist with essential, once-off expenditure in exceptional circumstances. Expenditure of a predictable or recurring nature such as, fuel or clothing should be budgeted for out of your regular weekly income. There is no automatic right of entitlement to an Exceptional Needs Payment. Payment is at the discretion of the Health Service Executive taking into account all your circumstances.

Depending on your circumstances, an Exceptional Needs Payment may be paid to assist with the cost of:

- bedding or other essential household equipment
- funeral expenses
- other unforeseen large expenses.

Urgent Needs Payments

You may be paid an Urgent Needs Payment even if you are not normally eligible to receive assistance under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme. Payments are normally made to assist with immediate needs such as, food and clothing in the aftermath of a fire or flood.

Depending on your circumstances you may have to pay back all or part of what you have been paid, for example, if you are working, or once an insurance claim has been settled.

3. Who will normally qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance?

You will normally qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance if you:

- are living in the State and satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition*
- satisfy a means test
- have applied for any other benefit or allowances you may be entitled to, for example, One-Parent Family Payment
- have registered for work with FÁS if you are of working age.

*Habitual Residence is a condition which you must satisfy to qualify for certain social welfare assistance payments and Child Benefit. This condition took effect from 1 May 2004 and affects all applicants regardless of nationality. See information booklet **SW108** for more details.

4. Who is not eligible to receive assistance?

You will not normally qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance if you are:

- not Habitually Resident in the State
- in full-time work that is, working for more than 30 hours per week
- in full-time education
- involved in a trade dispute. However, you may claim Supplementary Welfare Allowance for your dependants.

Those who do not normally qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance may be eligible to receive an Urgent Needs Payment in certain circumstances. See page 5 for more details about Urgent Needs Payments.

5. What is the means test?

The main items taken into account for the means test are:

- all cash income, including most Social Welfare and Health Service Executive payments except Child Benefit, Domiciliary Care Allowance, Blind Welfare Allowance, Guardian's Payments (Contributory and Non-Contributory) and Respite Care Grant
- for people under 25 years of age, the value of any benefit or privilege for example free board and lodging
- the value of investments and savings or property (but not the value of your home) that you may have.

The value of investments, savings or property (but not the value of your own home) is calculated using the following formula:

Capital:	Weekly means assessed:
First €5,000	Nil
Next €10,000	€1 per €1,000
Next €25,000	€2 per €1,000
Over €40,000	€4 per €1,000

If you are married or you are living with someone as husband and wife, we will include the means of your spouse or partner in the means test.

6. How much can I get?

Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance is made up of a personal rate for the applicant and additional increases for qualified adults and children. A qualified child is a person under age 18 who lives with you and depends on you for financial support.

A child aged 18 and up to age 22 continues to qualify until the end of the academic year in which they reach age 22 if they are in full-time education by day.

The current rates of payment are available in the Department of Social and Family Affairs Rates of Payment booklet **SW 19**.

7. How is payment made?

Supplementary Welfare Allowance may be paid by cheque, postdraft or directly into a bank account.

8. Repayment of Supplementary Welfare Allowance

In certain cases you may have to repay any assistance you have received under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme.

For example:

- if Supplementary Welfare Allowance is paid while you are waiting for a Social Welfare payment, the amount paid will be deducted from the arrears of your Social Welfare payment
- if you are paid an Urgent Needs Payment, you may have to pay back all or part of what you have been paid if you are working or once an insurance claim has been settled.

See information leaflet **SW2** for more details.

9. Rent and Mortgage Interest Supplements

When you apply for a Rent or Mortgage Interest Supplement, a decision will be made based on:

- whether the size of your accommodation is appropriate to your family size
- if you have applied for or have been refused Local Authority housing where this is available
- if you have a valid reason for leaving the parental home
- the cost of your accommodation compared to rent levels for similar accommodation in the area

- whether you are sharing your accommodation with other tenants
- what arrangements, if any, you have made with your lending agency to re-negotiate your mortgage payments.

Note

You must have been able to meet the mortgage repayments when the mortgage was taken out.

10. When and how do I apply?

You should apply for Supplementary Welfare Allowance to the Community Welfare Officer at your local office of the Health Service Executive. If you do not know where your local office of the Health Service Executive is, or if you want information about opening times, you should contact the head office of the Health Service Executive. These are listed at page 14 to 16 of this booklet.

The Community Welfare Officer will tell you what information they need in order to make a decision on your claim, but it would be helpful if you took the following with you:

- Personal Public Service Numbers (PPS No.) for yourself, your spouse or partner and your child(ren)
- **evidence of any income** you are getting
- **a note from your local Social Welfare Office** and your **last wages slip** if you have just applied for Jobseeker's Benefit or Allowance.
- your **Child Benefit book** or **birth certificates** for any child(ren) you may be claiming for if you do not have PPS numbers for them

- **rent book** if you are applying for help with your rent
- **a statement** giving details of your mortgage interest payments if you are applying for help with your mortgage interest.

11. How are claims dealt with?

You will be asked by the Community Welfare Officer to fill in a form giving information about your means and other circumstances. The Community Welfare Officer will let you know if you will receive a payment or if they need more information before making a decision on your claim. The Officer may visit you at home to discuss your circumstances and any special needs you may have. Any information given will be treated in strict confidence.

12. Can I appeal against a decision?

You have the right to appeal against a decision if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your claim for a payment under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme. To appeal, you should write to the Appeals Officer at your regional office of the Health Service Executive. The addresses are listed at page 14 to 16 of this booklet. See information booklet **SW56** for more details of about appeals.

13. Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance

This scheme is operated within the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme and gives assistance towards the cost of clothing and footwear for children of school going age. The scheme operates from the start of June to the end of September each year.

You may be eligible to receive assistance in respect of a child between the ages of 2 and 17 or children aged between 18 and 22 who are in full-time education and for whom you are paid a qualified child increase if you are in receipt of a Social Welfare or Health Service Executive payment and your income is below a certain level.

Application forms are available from the Community Welfare Officer at your local office of the Health Service Executive. See information booklet **SW 75** for more details.

14. National Fuel Scheme

You may be eligible for a €18 weekly allowance under the National Fuel Scheme during the winter months.

An additional weekly Smokeless Fuel Allowance of €3.90 is payable to help with the extra cost of smokeless fuel if you live in an area where the sale of bituminous coal is banned.

For further details on the National Fuel Scheme see information leaflets **SW 17** and **SW 17a**.

15. Where can I get more information?

For more information about Supplementary Welfare Allowance, contact:

Supplementary Welfare Allowance Section

Department of Social and Family Affairs
Social Welfare Services
College Road
Sligo

Telephone: LoCall 1890 500 000
(071) 915 7100

Fax: (071) 913 5123

You can get information on social welfare services, or get information booklets and application forms:

- on the Internet at **www.welfare.ie**,
- or
- from your local Social Welfare Office (see State Directory section of your phone book or the Golden Pages for contact numbers),
- or
- by telephoning the Department's LoCall Leaflet Request Line at **1890 20 23 25**,
- or
- by telephoning Information Services at LoCall **1890 66 22 44** (from the Republic of Ireland) or **+ 353 71 91 93313**.

Note

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

Other booklets which may be of interest are:

National Fuel Scheme	SW 17
Smokeless Fuel Scheme	SW 17a
Social Welfare Rates of Payment	SW 19
Appeals Office (An Introducton)	SW56
Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance Scheme	SW 75

16. Appeals Officers and Headquarters of the Health Service Executive

For people living in:	Address	Tel. Number
Eastern Area Dublin City and the counties of Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow	Appeals Officer Unit 1, Bridgecourt Office Park Walkinstown Ave Dublin 12	(01) 460 9300
	Headquarters Community Welfare Services Floor 3 Park House North Circular Road Dublin 7	(01) 882 3497
Midland Area Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath	Appeals Officer Arden Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.	(0506) 215 01
	Headquarters Arden Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.	(0506) 218 68
Mid-Western Area Limerick City and the counties of Limerick, Clare & Tipperary (N/R)	Appeals Officer St. Joseph's Mulgrave Street Limerick.	(061) 461 478
	Headquarters 31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick.	(061) 483 286

North Eastern Area

Counties of Cavan, Louth,
Meath and Monaghan

Appeals Officer

Dublin Road
Kells, Co. Meath

(046) 928 0521

Headquarters

Dublin Road
Kells, Co. Meath

(046) 928 2500

North Western Area

Counties of Donegal,
Leitrim and Sligo

Appeals Officer

Manorhamilton,
Co. Leitrim

(071) 982 0545

Headquarters

Manorhamilton,
Co. Leitrim.

(071) 982 0400

South Eastern Area

Waterford City and
the counties of Carlow,
Kilkenny, Tipperary (S/R),
Waterford and Wexford

Appeals Officer

Lacken, Dublin Road,
Kilkenny.

(056) 778 4299

Headquarters

Lacken, Dublin Road,
Kilkenny.

(056) 775 2208

Southern Area

Cork City and the
counties of Cork
and Kerry

Appeals Officer

20 West End, Mallow,
Co. Cork

(022) 449 44

Headquarters

Wilton Road,
Cork.

(021) 454 5011

Western Area

Galway City and the
counties of Galway,
Mayo and Roscommon

Appeals Officer

Merlin Park Regional Hospital
Galway (091) 775 935

Headquarters

Merlin Park Regional Hospital
Galway. (091) 757 631