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March 2011

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 18 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 One-Parent Family Payment?

One-Parent Family Payment (OPFP) is a payment for men and women who are bringing up a child without the support of a partner.

You may apply for this payment if:

- you are unmarried, widowed or a surviving civil partner, a prisoner's spouse or civil partner, separated or divorced, or
- your marriage has been annulled or your civil partnership or civil union has been dissolved or you are no longer living with your spouse or civil partner, or
- you are no longer living with your cohabiting partner.

## 2. How do I qualify?

You qualify for this payment if you are aged under 66 years of age and:

- are a **'qualified parent'**.

### **A qualified parent is:**

- a widow, a widower or a surviving civil partner or
- a separated spouse or
- a civil partner who is not living with the other civil partner of the civil partnership or civil union or
- an unmarried person or

- a person who is not a party to a civil partnership or a civil union
- a person who is not in a cohabiting relationship
- a person whose spouse or civil partner is in prison or place of detention for not less than 6 months.

who is either:

- a parent,
- a step-parent,
- an adoptive parent or
- a legal guardian of at least 1 qualified child, who normally resides with that person,

satisfies

- a means test, and
- the Habitual Residence Condition

For more information on the Habitual Residence Condition log on to **[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)**

If you are **separated or divorced or your civil partnership or civil union has been dissolved**, you must have:

- been separated from your spouse or civil partner for at least 3 months, and
- sought maintenance from your spouse or civil partner.

If you are **unmarried, or a person who is not a party to a civil partnership or a civil union** you must:

- be the qualified parent of a qualified child, and
- sought maintenance from the other parent of the child.

If your **spouse or civil partner is in prison**, they must have:

- been sentenced to a prison term of at least 6 months, or
- been in custody for at least 6 months without being sentenced.

### 3. Who is a qualified child?

A qualified child is a child who is:

- mainly cared for by you and

**For new customers (those who first qualify for One-Parent Family Payment on or after 27 April 2011):**

- under age 14 years, or
- aged 14 or 15 years and whose family is in receipt of Domiciliary Care Allowance in respect of that child.

In circumstances where one of a couple who were married, in a civil partnership or a civil union or cohabiting dies (see section 5 for length of payment) payment can continue for any children aged over 14 years for a period of up to 2 years or until their 18th birthday whichever is the earlier.

**For existing customers (those who first qualify for One-Parent Family Payment before 27 April 2011)**

- aged under 18 years in 2011 and 2012
- aged under 17 years in 2013
- aged under 16 years in 2014
- aged under 15 years in 2015
- aged under 14 years in 2016
- aged 18 to 22 and in full-time education by day at a recognised school or college in 2012/2013 academic year.

## 4. How much can I get?

Your payment is made up of a rate for yourself and extra amounts for any qualified child(ren).

The amount you receive depends on your weekly means.

Where there is an entitlement to One-Parent Family Payment based on the age of the youngest child, an Increase for a Qualified Child in respect of other children in the family will continue for these other children until they reach 18 years or 22 years if in full-time education.

For more information, log on to **[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)**.

## 5. How long does my payment last?

You may get One-Parent Family Payment for as long as you meet the qualifying conditions.

### **For new customers (those who first qualify for One-Parent Family Payment on or after 27 April 2011):**

Your payment will be made until the youngest child in the family reaches the age of 14 years.

### **For existing customers (those who first qualify for One-Parent Family Payment before 27 April 2011)**

You will continue to get payment for:

- 2011 and 2012 or until the youngest child in the family reaches age 18 years.
- Until the end of the 2012/2013 academic year, if the youngest child in the family is in full-time education even if they are over 18 years of age.

- From 2013, your payment will cease when the youngest child reaches 17 years of age.
- From 2014, your payment will cease when the youngest child reaches 16 years of age.
- From 2015, your payment will cease when the youngest child reaches 15 years of age.
- From 2016 onwards, your payment will cease when the youngest child reaches 14 years of age.

### **New and existing customers**

- One-Parent Family Payment will continue for families where Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) is in payment until the child for whom DCA is paid reaches age 16.
- A person who is recently bereaved (who was married, in a civil partnership or a civil union or cohabiting) and is now parenting alone as a qualified parent (see section 2 above) can claim One-Parent Family Payment for two years from the date of death of their spouse, civil partner or cohabitant or until their youngest child reaches 18 years of age, whichever is earlier.

You may get **half** your One-Parent Family Payment for 6 months if your earnings exceed €425 a week provided you were getting your payment for at least 52 consecutive weeks. If you received a previous transitional payment between 5 April 2001 and 31 December 2003, the total number of weeks of transitional payment cannot exceed 52. The maximum number of weeks of transitional payment paid after 6 January 2005 is 26 weeks.

If you are getting One-Parent Family Payment for less than 52 consecutive weeks and your earnings exceed €425 a week your payment will stop.

## 6. What counts as means?

The following are the main items that count as means:

- income from employment or self-employment,
- maintenance payments, including maintenance paid to or for a qualified child,
- the value of any property you have other than your own home,
- the value of any investments, savings or shares that you may have,
- cash income and
- cash-in-hand.

You must complete the application form fully so that we can calculate your means. You must give all details of your means. You should submit all necessary documents such as bank statements, details of all your earnings, maintenance that you receive or other payslips with your application.

If you submit an incomplete application form or if you do not submit the required supporting documents your claim may be delayed or refused.

Your claim may be forwarded to a local Social Welfare Inspector for investigation and interview.

## 7. What does not count as means?

The following are some items that do not count as means:

- your own home,
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance or Rent or Mortgage Interest Supplement,
- Family Income Supplement,
- Child Benefit,
- Illness Benefit,
- Jobseeker's Benefit and
- your contributions to Personal Retirement Savings Account(s) (PRSAs).

## 8. How do you assess my earnings from employment or self-employment?

If you are working, we assess your earnings from employment or self-employment as follows:

We ignore the first €146.50 of weekly earnings from employment and/or self-employment.

This is known as weekly disregard.

We assess half the remainder of your earnings as means, up to €425 a week.

### Example

**You are a qualified parent, with two qualified children (aged 12 and 15) and weekly earnings of €200.00, but no other income.**

Gross weekly earnings €200.00  
Minus weekly disregard €146.50  
Remainder of earnings €53.50  
Divide by 2 = weekly means €26.75

In this example, you would get a total One-Parent Family Payment €227.60 (2011 Rates) a week (a personal rate of €168 and two increases for a qualified child, €29.80 each).

For more information, log on to **[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)**.

#### Note

**Anyone with a gross income of less than €425 (from employment and/or self-employment) is entitled to a disregard of superannuation contributions, social insurance contributions, pension levy and trade union subscriptions for the purposes of determining entitlement to One-Parent Family payment.**

#### Note

- **If you are a new applicant with earnings of more than €425 a week, you will not qualify for One-Parent Family Payment.**

## 9. How do you assess my maintenance payments?

We assess personal and child maintenance payments as means. We will add up maintenance from more than one person and assess the total amount.

You can pay rent or mortgage of up to €95.23 a week without it affecting how we assess your maintenance payments. However, we assess half the balance of any maintenance payments over this amount.

You must give evidence of housing costs, such as a rent receipt or a rent book from your landlord or a statement of your mortgage repayments.

### Example:

**You are a qualified parent with two qualified children. You get maintenance of €80.00 a week and pay rent of €35.00 a week.**

Weekly maintenance	€80.00
Minus weekly rent	<u>€35.00</u>
Balance of maintenance	€45.00
Divided by 2 = weekly means	€22.50

In this example, you would get One-Parent Family Payment of €232.60 (2011 Rates) a week (a personal rate of €173.00 and two increases for a qualified child, €29.80 each).

For more information, log on to **[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)**.

## 10. How do you assess my savings and investments?

When working out your means from savings and investments we first add together the following items:

- cash value of investments and property (excluding your home)
- money in any savings or other type of account and
- cash-in-hand.

We then use the following formula.

Capital:	Weekly means assessed:
First €20,000	Nil
€20,000 - €30,000	€1 per €1,000
€30,000 - €40,000	€2 per €1,000
Over €40,000	€4 per €1,000

### Example:

**You are a qualified parent with three qualified children and have savings and investments of €35,000, but no other income.**

Amount of savings	€35,000
Minus first €20,000 (disregarded)	<u>€20,000</u>
	€15,000

Balance of €15,000 is assessed as follows:

€10,000 is assessed at €1 per €1,000	€10.00
€5,000 is assessed at €2 per €1,000	€10.00
Weekly means	€20.00

In this example, you would get One-Parent Family Payment of €264.90 (2011 Rates) a week (a personal rate of €175.50 and three increases for a qualified child, €29.80 each).

## 11. How do I get my payment?

One-Parent Family Payment can be paid weekly:

- at your local post office by Social Services Card
- or**
- by direct payment into your current, deposit or savings account in a financial institution.

## 12. Can I get any extra benefits?

If you are getting One-Parent Family Payment, you may qualify for:

- Fuel Allowance
- Family Income Supplement (FIS)
- Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance (BTSCFA) - if the youngest child reaches age 14 years before the beginning of the school year, you may still claim BTSCFA that year.
- assistance under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme, such as Rent or Mortgage Interest Supplement
- Widowed or Surviving Civil Partner Grant (Entitlement dependent on applicant claiming in respect of qualified child(ren).

For more information, log on to **[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)**.

You may also be entitled to a medical card from the Health Service Executive.

For more information, log on to **[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)**.

## 13. Can I get any other social welfare payments?

You may qualify for **half** the personal rate of one of the following payments for a limited time as well as your One-Parent Family Payment:

- Jobseeker's Benefit
- Illness Benefit
- Maternity Benefit
- Adoptive Benefit
- Health and Safety Benefit
- Occupational Injury Benefit or
- Carer's Allowance.

For more information, log on to **[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)**.

## 14. Can I take up work or training and still get my One-Parent Family Payment?

You may take up work and still keep some or all of your One-Parent Family Payment. However, we take earnings from employment into account when we assess your means. See the example on page 10 for more information.

You may qualify for employment or education schemes as long as you meet certain conditions.

## Work and Training Schemes

As a lone parent, you may take part in certain work and training schemes and still keep part or all of your One-Parent Family Payment.

For more information, please see **[www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)** or **[www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie)**.

## Back to Education Programme

As a lone parent, you may return to further education and get a weekly allowance equal to the maximum amount of One-Parent Family Payment.

## Back to Work Enterprise Allowance - BTWEA

If you are getting One-Parent Family Payment for at least 12 months and you want to become self-employed, you may qualify for the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance **instead** of One-Parent Family Payment. You may keep a certain portion of your payment for 4 years.

You do not pay tax or PRSI on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance. However, your income from employment or self-employment may be subject to tax and PRSI.

You may also keep any secondary benefits you already have, for example, Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, Rent or Mortgage Interest Supplement.

For more information, log on to **[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)**.

You will also keep your medical card for the length of the scheme. For more information, log on to **[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)**.

**Where an existing customer (i.e. awarded prior to 27 April 2011) stops claiming One-Parent Family Payment between April 2011 and 2016:**

- to participate in the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) scheme; or
- where their earnings exceed the qualifying earnings limit for the scheme

The customer can reapply for the One-Parent Family Payment during that period based on the age conditions set out on pages 5 to 7.

For example, if a person with a youngest child aged 13 years of age leaves the scheme in September 2011 to participate in the BTEA and makes another claim for One-Parent Family Payment in June 2012 (when the child is 14 years of age), the person will continue to receive payment as long as they meet the conditions set out for **existing** customers.

## 15. What is the Household Budget Service?

The Household Budget Service is a free service from An Post for customers who receive their payment by Social Service Card. It gives you an easy-pay option for household bills. Using a direct debit, you can make a fixed payment to any of the following:

- local authorities, towards rent or mortgages
- ESB and Bord Gáis and
- Eircom, for telephone charges.

Contact An Post at Freefone 1800 70 71 72 for more information.

## 16. When and how do I apply?

If you are **widowed** or a **surviving civil partner** you should complete the application form **WCP 1** within 3 months of your spouse's or civil partner's death and send the form to:

Social Welfare Services (W/SCP Claims)

Department of Social Protection

College Road

Sligo

LoCall: 1890 500 000 (from the Republic of Ireland only) or  
+ 353 71 9157100 (from Northern Ireland or overseas)

**Warning:** If you fail to apply within 3 months of becoming eligible for One-Parent Family Payment, you may lose some payment.

In all other cases you should complete application form **OFF 1** and send it with the relevant certificates and documents to your local Social Welfare Office.

If you are **unmarried** or a **person who is not a party to a civil partnership or a civil union** you should apply **within 3 months** of the birth of your child.

If you are **separated or divorced or your civil partnership or civil union has been dissolved** you should apply within **6 months** of the date you separated from your spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner.

However, you must be separated for 3 months before you apply, as you cannot get a payment for the first 3 months after a separation.

If you are a **prisoner's spouse or civil partner** you may apply when your spouse or civil partner has been in custody for at least 6 months without being sentenced, or starts their sentence, which must be for at least 6 months.

## 17. Who is a 'liable relative'?

Men and women who must, by law, pay maintenance to a dependent spouse or civil partner and any dependent children not living with them are called 'liable relatives'.

If you are a liable relative and fail to pay enough maintenance to your spouse or civil partner or dependent child(ren), you must contribute to the cost of the One-Parent Family Payment, which we pay to your family.

The Maintenance Recovery Unit will contact the liable relative if they have not paid enough maintenance, when One-Parent Family Payment is awarded.

Please call the Maintenance Recovery Unit on (071) 96 72599 for more information.

## 18. Where can I get more information?

For more information on One-Parent Family Payment, contact your local Social Welfare Office.

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 19).
- 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.

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

**Other useful booklets**

<b>Back to Education Programme</b>	<b>SW 70</b>
<b>Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance</b>	<b>SW 75</b>
<b>Back to Work Enterprise Allowance</b>	<b>SW 92</b>
<b>Carers Allowance</b>	<b>SW 41</b>
<b>Family Income Supplement</b>	<b>SW 22</b>
<b>Habitual Residence Condition</b>	<b>SW 108</b>
<b>National Fuel Scheme</b>	<b>SW 17</b>
<b>Rates of Payment</b>	<b>SW 19</b>
<b>Supplementary Welfare Allowance</b>	<b>SW 54</b>
<b>Widow(er)'s/Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory Pension</b>	<b>SW 25</b>
<b>Widow(er)'s/Surviving Civil Partner's Non-Contributory Pension</b>	<b>SW 26</b>