



# Supports available to people on a Jobseeker's payment

There are a number of supports available for people on a jobseeker's payment to assist them engage in employment, enterprise, training and education opportunities. A brief summary is set out below. For more information on the schemes listed below, log on to [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) or contact your local Citizens Information Centre, your local Intreo Centre or your local Branch Office.

In Intreo Centres, Case Officers draw up a personal progression plan with the customer. This plan consists of employment actions and training actions agreed between the customer and the Case Officer, which the customer has agreed to undertake to gain employment in the future.

## Jobseeker's Payment

To qualify for a jobseeker's payment you must be unemployed, capable of work, available for full-time work and genuinely looking for work. You must notify the Department if:

- you find work or if you are no longer available to take up work,
- there are any changes in your income, means or those of your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant,
- there are any other changes in your circumstances whatsoever,
- you or your dependants intend leaving the country,
- you or your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant start(s) a course of study, education or training.

## Employment Supports

### What happens if I get a short period of work or a short training course?

If you sign-off the Live Register to take up work or go on a short training course (for a period of time not exceeding 12 weeks), your claim will not be closed. You **must** notify your local Intreo Centre or your local Branch Office before you take up the work or course. Failure to do so will result in a delay getting your claim back in payment.

## Supports for people returning to work/looking for work

### Can I work part-time and keep my jobseeker's payment?

Often, if you start casual or part-time work, it is possible to keep all or part of your jobseeker's payment depending on the days you work and the level of pay you receive. You must inform your local Intreo Centre or your local Branch Office if you are starting work.

You must meet all the conditions for Jobseeker's Allowance (JA) or Jobseeker's Benefit (JB). For example, you must continue to look for full-time work and if on JA, satisfy the means test.

If you are self-employed and your business ceases or if you are on low income, you may apply for the means-tested Jobseeker's Allowance.

## Family Income Supplement (FIS)

FIS is a weekly tax-free payment available to low paid workers, with at least one dependent child.

To qualify for FIS, you must satisfy the following conditions:

- your average weekly family income must be below a certain limit (based on your family size),  
**and**
- you must be in paid employment for at least 19 hours a week or 38 hours a fortnight. The employment must be likely to last for 3 months.

The amount you receive is 60% of the difference between your weekly family income and the income limit which applies to your family size. Weekly family income is made up of average net assessable earnings and any other income your family may have.

## Part-time Job Incentive Scheme (PTJI)

This scheme allows some long-term unemployed people to take up part-time work for less than 24 hours a week and qualify for a weekly allowance instead of their jobseeker's payment. The part-time work must be likely to last for at least two months. Initially, you can stay on the PTJI scheme for one year, but this may be extended for a further period. While on the scheme, you must continue to look for full-time work. You may also qualify for Family Income Supplement.

## Back to Work Family Dividend

The Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD) scheme provides financial support to Jobseeker and One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) recipients with children, who end their claim and who are in or take up employment or self-employment.

If you meet the eligibility criteria of the scheme, you will be entitled to a weekly payment for up to 2 years following the ending of your social welfare claim.

You may be eligible for the scheme if you are aged under 66, have at least one qualified child and are on one of the following payments:

- Jobseeker's Benefit or Allowance for at least 12 months in total (and at least 6 months in the last year),
- One-Parent Family Payment,
- Jobseeker's Transitional Payment (JST).

Your family must exit welfare (other than Family Income Supplement (FIS) and Child Benefit) by either, being in or taking up employment or self-employment.

## First Steps - Youth Development Internships

The First Steps program is part of the EU Youth Guarantee and will offer a young person aged 18 to 24, who has had little or no experience of working, the opportunity to learn basic work skills and social skills while on a placement in a real work situation.

Participation on the scheme is wholly voluntary, although placements will be offered and suitable candidates encouraged to participate accordingly.

To qualify for participation on First Steps, a candidate must be:

- Aged between 18-24,  
**and**
- Be unemployed for at least 12 months.  
**or**
- If unemployed less than 12 months, be considered by a Case Officer to face a significant barrier in his/her efforts to find work,  
**and**
- Referred by a Case Officer.

Qualifying payments for participation on First Steps include the following:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Jobseeker's Benefit
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Jobseeker's Transitional Payment
- Disability Allowance
- Blind Person's Pension
- Signing for Credits

Time spent on Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) will count towards eligibility for First Steps, provided the programme has been completed in full and the person was 18 years or older while on the programme and is in receipt of a payment immediately prior to the First Steps placement.

## EURES

EURES, the European Employment Services Network, was established by the European Commission to facilitate the free movement of workers between the European Union (EU)/ European Economic Area (EEA) countries. At European level EURES is a cooperation network formed by the public employment services in all EU/EEA Countries consisting of 1000+ trained EURES advisers and a European database with over 1 million employment opportunities throughout Europe

[www.eures.europa.eu](http://www.eures.europa.eu).

In Ireland, EURES is coordinated by the European Employment Services section of the Department of Social Protection. There are 16 EURES Advisers located throughout Ireland who can be contacted through local Intreo Centres.

EURES advisers support jobseekers and employers in Ireland, wishing to avail of job and recruitment opportunities in the wider European Labour Market.

EURES Ireland is currently implementing the 'EYE' 'Experience Your Europe' programme.

There are 2 options promoted under the 'EYE' Programme.

### Option 1: Your first EURES Job

Through your first EURES job, jobseekers aged 18-35 can qualify for financial support for an interview trip abroad, or for relocation expenses when taking up a job in another EU Country. (You must apply in advance of travelling for interview/or prior to relocating).

### Option 2: The Co- Sponsored Placement Programme

The Co-Sponsored Placement programme supports jobseekers, aged 18-30, in taking up a work placement in another European Country for up to 12 months. During this time the jobseeker will be co-sponsored by EURES Ireland and the employer offering the work placement. This programme provides opportunities for jobseekers to gain experience and upskill in their chosen career. The experience gained will increase their job prospects on their return to Ireland.

If you would like more information on any of the supports and services provided by EURES please email [eures@welfare.ie](mailto:eures@welfare.ie).

## Community Employment (CE)

Community Employment (CE) is a part-time employment scheme. It helps long-term unemployed people re-enter the active workforce by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return-to-work routine.

The programme will help you develop both your personal and work skills. There are two options:

- part-time integration (1 year),  
**and**
- part-time job scheme (up to 3 years).

You work on average 19.5 hours each week. To qualify, you must have been getting certain social welfare payments for 12 months or more.

## Tús

Tús is a community work placement scheme. It provides short-term working opportunities in community and voluntary organisations, in both urban and rural areas. Participants work on average 19.5 hours a week for 12 months.

To be eligible to participate on Tús, the following will apply:

- A person must have been continuously unemployed for 12 months and currently be in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance payment,  
**or**
- Be in receipt of Jobseeker's Transitional Payment (JST). No qualifying period applies to JST.

## Gateway

Gateway is a labour activation scheme providing short-term work opportunities in City & County Councils, for an average of 19.5 hours a week for 22 months.

Participants must:

- Have been continuously unemployed for 24 months and currently be in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance payment,  
**or**
- Be in receipt of Jobseeker's Transitional Payment (JST). No qualifying period applies to JST.

## Rural Social Scheme (RSS)

This scheme provides income support for farmers and fishermen/women who are in receipt of specific social welfare payments. In return, local communities benefit from the work carried out by participants on RSS.

Listed below are some of the social welfare payments that apply:

- Adult Dependants of customers on certain social welfare payments if they are actively farming
- Blind Person's Pension
- Deserted Wives Benefit/Allowance
- Disability Allowance
- Farm Assist
- Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Transitional Payment (JST)
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Widow(er)'s/Surviving Civil Partner's Pension

## Enterprise Supports

### Short-Term Enterprise Allowance (STEA)

The Short-Term Enterprise Allowance (STEA) gives support to you if you want to start your own business. To qualify you must be getting Jobseeker's Benefit (JB). The allowance replaces your JB with a weekly payment of a similar amount. If approved, STEA is payable for the remainder of your JB claim.

### Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA)

This payment allows those who are long-term unemployed to keep their social welfare payment while setting up a business.

You may get your full social welfare payment in the first year and three-quarters of it in the second year.

To qualify, you must set up a business that a Local Development Company has recommended and a Case Officer has approved in writing in advance, and be in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance, or Jobseeker's Benefit (with an underlying entitlement to Jobseeker's Allowance) for at least 9 months or one of the other qualifying payments for at least 12 months.

## Training Supports

### Skillnets

Skillnets funds the Job Seekers Support Programme (JSSP) which is for unemployed people. It combines training with work placement.

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

### Springboard

This higher education initiative offers you a choice of full-time or part-time courses including certificates, degrees, post-graduate and masters programmes. Springboard offers courses in sectors such as Information and Communications Technology (ICT), the Medical Devices Sector, Bio-Pharma, Pharmachem, Green Energy and other sectors.

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

### Approved Training Course

Places on approved training courses (Education and Training Boards (ETB)) are open to all.

If you are receiving a payment and you apply for a place on an approved training course, you will receive a training allowance from the training authority for the period of the course.

You can also avail of an approved training course if you are signing for credits, however, no training allowance is payable to customers signing for credits only. Part-time or full-time courses help to develop your skills and knowledge in a wide range of areas.

### Part-Time Education Option (PTEO)

The Part-Time Education Option allows you to keep your Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit while you attend a part-time day, evening or distance course of education or training.

You must request approval before commencing the course from your local Intreo Centre or your local Branch Office.

To approve the course the Deciding Officer must be satisfied that the course is likely to improve your chances of getting a job.

## Back to Education (BTE) Programme

This programme supports you to take part in educational and personal development courses (at second or third level) that will help you to find a job.

To qualify you must:

- have been accepted onto a qualifying course,
- in general, be over 21 years of age,
- for certain post-graduate courses, be 24 years of age,
- be receiving certain social welfare payments.

There are five BTE programmes and these are outlined as follows:

### 1. Back to Education Allowance (BTEA)

This programme supports you to take part in full-time educational courses (at second or third level) in order to gain qualifications that will help you to find a job.

To qualify you must be:

- recommended by a Case Officer,
- accepted onto a qualifying course,
- over 21 years of age,
  - or**
  - aged between 18 and 21 years and out of formal education for at least 2 years,
  - or**
  - over 24 years of age for certain post-graduate courses,
- receiving certain social welfare payments,
  - and**
  - be working towards a qualification on an approved course.

### 2. Second-Level Option

You can attend a second-level course of education at any secondary, community, comprehensive or vocational school. The course must be full-time and lead to a certificate recognised by the Department of Education and Skills or approved by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), for example, Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, Post-Leaving Certificate or an Access/Foundation course.

### 3. Third-Level Option

You can attend a third-level course at any university, third-level college or institution in Ireland or Northern Ireland, so long as the course is a full-time day course and is approved by the Department of Education and Skills for a student grant and/or is recognised by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

### 4. Post-Graduate Option

This option is only for customers aged 24 and over who wish to take a post-graduate course of study that leads to a Higher Diploma (H Dip) qualification in any discipline, or a Professional Masters of Education (PME) only.

To apply for the Post-Graduate Option, the applicant must be in receipt of a qualifying social welfare payment for 9 months (234 days) and in the case of a Professional Masters of Education (PME) must be in receipt of a qualifying payment for 12 months (312 days).

Only post-graduate courses in Ireland are eligible for the BTEA.

### 5. Education, Training and Development Option

Under the Education, Training and Development Option, you may continue to get your Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit while attending certain courses of education, training or development so long as you meet certain conditions.

You must request approval before commencing the course from your Case Officer in your local Intreo Centre or your local Branch Office.

# Other and Secondary Benefits

## Keeping my Secondary Benefits

You may be able to keep your secondary benefits, such as rent/mortgage interest supplements, in certain circumstances, where activation support is being provided.

If you are in receipt of rent supplement or mortgage interest supplement and are considering taking part in any of these educational or employment support schemes, you should contact the officer dealing with your claim so that your entitlements can be clarified.

## Supplementary Welfare Allowance

Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) is aimed at persons whose means are insufficient to meet their needs and those of their dependants. SWA can consist of a basic payment and/or a supplement in respect of certain expenses a person may not be able to meet.

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

## Payment of Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) in advance of wages

In instances where a person has started employment and is obliged to work a back week/ fortnight etc. before payment of wages commences, in certain prescribed circumstances, a payment of SWA may be made by the Community Welfare Service for up to a maximum period of 30 days after starting employment. This is to facilitate a person in having some source of income until they receive their first wages.

## Rent Supplement

Rent Supplement is paid to people living in private rented accommodation who cannot provide for the cost of their accommodation from their own resources.

In general, you may qualify for a Rent Supplement if your only income is a social welfare payment and you satisfy other conditions.

The amount of Rent Supplement that is paid will generally ensure that your income, after paying rent, does not fall below a minimum level.

Rent Supplement is only intended to be a short-term housing support. If you have a long-term housing need it may be met by the Local Authority in your area through Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) which is available nationwide.

Further details can be found at [www.hap.ie](http://www.hap.ie).

## Adult Literacy Services

The Adult Literacy Service provides help on a private and confidential basis for adults experiencing difficulty with reading, writing, spelling, numeracy, form filling and letter writing. Tuition is offered free on a one-to-one or small group basis.

Contact your local Education and Training Board (ETB).

## Medical Card or GP Visit Card

You may qualify for a medical card if you satisfy a means test.

This card allows you to receive free GP services, prescribed drugs and medicines, in-patient and out-patient public hospital services, medical appliances, dental, optical and aural services, maternity and infant care services, public health nurse, social worker and other community care services.

A GP visit card provides free access to GP services.

## Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

MABS provides detailed advice on managing your debts. It can advise you in negotiations with creditors, including alternative repayment options for your debts. It can also give you information on dealing with rent arrears.

The MABS helpline 0761 07 2000 is open from 9am to 8pm, Monday to Friday. MABS also operates a nationwide network of centres, staffed by specialist money advisers.

## Voluntary Work Option

If you do voluntary work within the State you may continue to qualify for a jobseeker's payment providing you are still available for and genuinely seeking work.

You should complete application form **VW 1** available on [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie). The completed application form should be sent to your local Intreo Centre or your local Branch Office and a Deciding Officer will decide whether you may take up the voluntary work in question without affecting your jobseeker's payment.

Issued by:  
Information Services  
Department of Social Protection  
Social Welfare Services  
College Road  
Sligo

For more information:

- Log on to [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie).
- Telephone: **(071) 919 3302**  
LoCall: **1890 66 22 44**  
If you are calling from outside the Republic of Ireland please call + **353 71 91 93302**.
- Drop in to your local Citizens Information Centre, your local Intreo Centre or your local Branch Office.

#### **Note**

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

**This leaflet is intended as a guide only and is not a legal interpretation.**