



€10 minimum increase in all weekly Social Welfare payments

€11.50 per week increase for Widows & Widowers aged 66 and over in receipt of Contributory Pensions

€6 and €8 increases in Child Benefit – effective from April 2004

€28 per week increase in Family Income Supplements Thresholds

€100 increase in Respite Care Grant

Increase in weekly Income Disregards for Carer's Allowance of €40 (single) and €80 (couple)

All weekly increases effective from January 2004

INCREASES

Personal Rates

• Increase of €10 per week for recipients of the following payments:

- Old Age Pensions.
- Retirement Pension.
- Invalidity Pension.
- Death Benefit.

(The above increases apply to full rate payments and there are proportionate increases for recipients of reduced rate contributory pensions.)

- Widows, Widowers and Women in receipt of Deserted Wife's Benefit aged under 66.

- Disablement Pension.
 - Unemployment Benefit/Assistance.
 - Disability Benefit/Allowance.
 - Blind Pension.
 - Pre-Retirement Allowance.
 - Farm Assist.
 - One-Parent Family Payment.
 - Carer's Benefit/Allowance.
 - Constant Attendance Allowance.
 - Supplementary Welfare Allowance.
- (January 2004)**

- Increase of €11.50 per week for widows and widowers aged 66 and over on Widow's/Widower's (Contributory) Pension and for women getting Deserted Wife's Benefit who are aged 66 and over, bringing these payments to the same rate as Old Age (Contributory) Pension. **(January 2004)**

Child Benefit

- Increase of €6 for each of the first two children. **(April 2004)**
- Increase of €8 for the third and each subsequent child. **(April 2004)**



Qualified Adult Allowances

- Increase of €7.70 per week in Qualified Adult Allowance for Old Age (Contributory) Pension and Retirement Pension where the qualified adult is aged 66 or over.
- Increase of €6.70 per week in Qualified Adult Allowance for Old Age (Contributory) Pension and Retirement Pension where the qualified adult is under age 66.
- Increase of €6.60 per week in Qualified Adult Allowance for all recipients of Old Age (Non-Contributory) Pension.
- Increase of €16.10 per week in Qualified Adult Allowance for Invalidity Pension where the qualified adult is aged 66 or over.
- Increase of €7.10 per week in Qualified Adult Allowance for Invalidity Pension where the qualified adult is under age 66.
- Increase of €6.60 per week in Qualified Adult Allowance for all recipients of the Blind Pension.
- Increase of €6.60 per week for all other Qualified Adult payments.

These rates apply to full rate Qualified Adult Allowances with

proportionate increases for people on reduced payments.
(All Qualified Adult Allowances increase from January 2004)

Carers

- Increase of €10 per week for recipients of Carer's Benefit or Allowance.
(January 2004)
- Improvements in the means test for Carer's Allowance increasing the weekly income disregard by €40 per week for single people and €80 per week for couples bringing the disregards to €250 and €500 per week respectively.
(April 2004)
- Respite Care Grant increased by €100 to €835 from €735. Carers looking after more than one person will receive a grant of €1,670.
(June 2004)

Families and Children

- Child Benefit increases to €131.60 per month for each of the first two children and to €165.30 per month for the third and each subsequent child.
(April 2004)
- Family Income Supplement (FIS) weekly income thresholds to be increased by €28 to benefit every family on FIS. See Table overleaf.
(January 2004)

- Increase minimum Family Income Supplement payment by €7 per week, from €13 to €20.
(January 2004)
- Disregard Family Income Supplement for assessment of entitlement to Rent/Mortgage Interest Supplement.
(January 2004)
- The duration of Adoptive Benefit to be increased from 14 to 16 weeks, following the enactment of proposed changes in Adoptive Leave legislation.
- Increase of €10 per week in the minimum rate of Maternity Benefit, from €141.60 to €151.60.
(January 2004)
- €1 million additional funding in 2004 for School Meals Scheme.

Pensioners

- Increase of €3 to €26 per week in the Rent/Mortgage Interest Supplement disregard.
(January 2004)
- Special increase in the Death Benefit Pension to €173.70 per week for recipients aged 80 or over.
(May 2004)

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

- Improvements to After Death payments.
(June 2004)

Qualified Adult Allowances

- Upper income ceiling for tapered rates in respect of qualified adults to be



increased from €203.16 per week to €210 per week.
(January 2004)

Widow and Widower's

- €200 increase in Widowed Parent Grant, from €2,500 to €2,700.
(Budget Day)
- Extend entitlement for five years to Widow/er's Non-Contributory Pension where a recipient aged 66 and over takes up residence in Northern Ireland.
(April 2004)

Unemployment

- €400,000 increase in funding for the Special Projects Fund, from €2.1m to €2.5m.
- Additional funding of €400,000 towards Technical Assistance and Training Fund from €2.15m to €2.55m.
- Reduce qualifying period on Live Register for access to Back to Work Enterprise Allowance by 2 years, from 5 years to 3 years.
(March 2004)
- The assessment of Benefit and Privilege for Unemployment Assistance will be abolished for those aged 27 and over living in the parental home.
(April 2004)
- Where there is an entitlement to a reduced Unemployment Assistance payment due to means derived from parental income, the minimum payment will

be increased by €8.20 from €31.80 to €40 per week.
(April 2004)

Free Travel

- Extend the Free Travel Companion Pass to recipients of Unemployability Supplement who are currently entitled to a standard Free Travel Pass.
(April 2004)

CHANGES IN PRSI

Employees

- Earnings ceiling for PRSI increased by €1,740 from €40,420 to €42,160 per year.
(January 2004)

GRANTS

Family Services

- €1 million funding for the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family.
- €170,000 for the expansion of the Family Mediation Service.
- €1.17 million for the Family Resource Centre Programme.
- €350,000 additional funding for Marriage/Family Counselling.

MABS

- Additional funding of €1.01 million.

Comhairle

- Additional funding of €250,000.

Combat Poverty Agency

- Additional funding of €190,000.

Schedule for Increases

January:

All FIS customers will receive their increase in full from the beginning of January.

Customers on short-term weekly payments (mainly Unemployment Benefit/Assistance, Farm Assist, Disability Benefit, Carer's Benefit, and Supplementary Welfare Allowance) will receive their increase in full from their first pay-day in January.

Customers on long-term weekly payments who are paid by electronic methods through Post Offices and Banks will receive their increase in full from their first pay-day in January.

February:

Long-term customers **on book payments** will receive their increase in mid-February backdated to January. In some cases (such as Disability Allowance and Old Age Pensions) an advance payment to end-March will also be paid to those customers whose books are due for renewal at the beginning of April.

April :

Child Benefit customers paid **by electronic methods** will receive their increase in full from April 2004.

May:

Child Benefit customers on **book payments** will receive their increase through a special payment in May, which will be backdated to April.



	Weekly personal rate Present	Weekly personal rate New	Adult Allowance Present	Adult Allowance New	Each child Full Rate
Social Insurance Payments					
Retirement/Old Age (Contributory) Pension					
— Under Age 80	157.30	167.30	under 66	111.50	19.30
— Aged 80 and over	163.70	173.70	66 or over	129.20	19.30
Widow's/Widower's (Con) Pension/Deserted Wife's Benefit					
— Under Age 66	130.30	140.30			21.60
— Aged 66 and Under Age 80	155.80	167.30			21.60
— Aged 80 and over	162.20	173.70			21.60
Invalidity Pension					
— Under Age 65	130.30	140.30	under 66	100.10	19.30
— Aged 65 and Under Age 80	157.30	167.30	66 or over	129.20	19.30
— Aged 80 and over	163.70	173.70			19.30
Carer's Benefit					
— Disability/Unemployment/Health & Safety/Injury Benefit	139.70	149.70	82.80	89.40	16.80
— Death Benefit	124.80	134.80			16.80
— Under Age 66	153.60	163.60			
— Aged 66 and under Age 80	161.70	171.70			
— Aged 80 and over	161.70	173.70			
Social Assistance Payments					
Old Age (Non-Contributory) Pension					
— Aged 66 and Under Age 80	144.00	154.00	95.20	101.80	16.80
— Aged 80 and over	150.40	160.40			16.80
Blind Pension					
— Under Age 66	124.80	134.80	under 66	89.40	16.80
— Aged 66 and Under Age 80	144.00	154.00	66 or over	101.80	16.80
— Aged 80 and over	150.40	160.40			16.80
Widow's/Widower's (Non-Contributory) Pension/Deserted Wife's/Prisoner's Wife's Allowance					
— Under Age 66	124.80	134.80			
— Aged 66 and Under Age 80	144.00	154.00			
— Aged 80 and over	150.40	160.40			
Carer's Allowance					
— Under Age 66	129.60	139.60			16.80
— Aged 66 and over	147.80	157.80			16.80
One-Parent Family Payment					
— Under Age 66	124.80	134.80			19.30
— Aged 66 and over	144.00	154.00			19.30
Pre-Retirement/Disability Allowance					
— Supplementary Welfare Allowance	124.80	134.80	82.80	89.40	16.80
— Unemployment Assistance - Short-term	124.80	134.80	82.80	89.40	16.80
— Unemployment Assistance - Long-term	124.80	134.80	82.80	89.40	16.80
— Farm Assist	124.80	134.80	82.80	89.40	16.80
Other Social Welfare Allowances					
— Maternity/Adoptive Benefit - Minimum rate	141.60	151.60			
— Orphan's Pension/Allowance	97.00	107.00			

Child Benefit

Number of Children	Present Monthly Rate	New Monthly Rate
	€	€
1 child	125.60	131.60
2 children	251.20	263.20
3 children	408.50	428.50
4 children	565.80	593.80
5 children	723.10	759.10
6 children	880.40	924.40
7 children	1,037.70	1,089.70
8 children	1,195.00	1,255.00

Family Income Supplement (FIS)

Family Size	Present Income Limit	NEW Income Limit
	€	€
1 child	379.00	407.00
2 children	405.00	433.00
3 children	430.00	458.00
4 children	455.00	483.00
5 children	487.00	515.00
6 children	513.00	541.00
7 children	534.00	562.00
8 children or more	556.00	584.00

FIS is calculated at 60% of the difference between net weekly income (ie gross pay less Tax, Employees PRSI, Health Contribution, Superannuation) and the income limit for your family size.