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Qualifying conditions for our schemes change from time to time. Always check with your local Intreo Centre, 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.



## 1. What is One-Parent Family Payment?

One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) 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 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 the payment if you are aged under 66 years of age with at least one relevant child (see page 5) 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
- an unmarried person, or

- a person who is not a party to a civil partnership,
- 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 relevant 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 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** you must:

- be the qualified parent of at least one relevant child, and
- have 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 relevant child?

A relevant child is:

- aged under 7 years,
- ordinarily resident in the State,  
and
- mainly cared for by you.

If you have a relevant child and other qualified children over the age of 7 years you will be paid an increase for them also. If you have a relevant child an increase is paid for children under 18 years and between 18-22 years if they are in full-time education.

Recent changes to the eligibility criteria for the One Parent Family Payment scheme are contained below.

#### **Extension of youngest child age in certain circumstances:**

- Special provisions have been put in place for customers who are in receipt of the Domiciliary Care Allowance. In these cases, One-Parent Family Payment will remain in payment until the youngest child reaches 16 years or until Domiciliary Care Allowance ceases whichever is the sooner.
- A person who is recently bereaved (married, co-habiting and persons in a civil partnership) and is thus parenting alone but who doesn't qualify for a Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partners Contributory Pension can claim one-parent family payment for up to two years from the date of death of the spouse, cohabitant or civil partner or until their youngest child reaches 18 years of age, whichever is earlier.

- If an OFP customer is in receipt of half rate Carer's Allowance payment, OFP will continue to be paid until the youngest child reaches 16 years where a Carer's Allowance is also in payment.
- OFP customers who are also in receipt of Blind Pension can retain both their OFP and their Blind Pension until the 16th birthday of their youngest child.

## 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. What counts as means?

The following are the main items that count as means:

- income from all employments including home help 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.

## 6. 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,  
and
- your contributions to Personal Retirement Savings Account(s) (PRSAs).

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

Your average weekly earnings must not exceed €425.

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

We don't count the first €90.00 of weekly earnings from employment and/or self-employment.

We assess half the remainder of your earnings over this €90.00 as means, up to €425 a week.

### Example

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

Gross weekly earnings	<b>€200.00</b>
Minus weekly disregard	<b>-€ 90.00</b>
Remainder of earnings	<b>€110.00</b>
Divide by 2 = weekly means	<b>€ 55.00</b>

In this example you would get a total One-Parent Family Payment of **€200.10** (a personal rate of **€140.50** 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.**

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

We assess personal and child maintenance payments as means. That is, all maintenance payments are assessed as means.

If you have a housing cost, up to €95.23 a week of your maintenance payment is offset against your housing cost and half the remaining amount is assessed as means.

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

In this example, you would get One-Parent Family Payment of **€232.60** (at current 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)**.

## 9. 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	<b>€35,000</b>
Minus first €20,000 (disregarded)	<b>-€20,000</b>
	<b>€15,000</b>

Balance of €15,000 is assessed as follows:

€10,000 is assessed at €1 per €1,000	<b>€10.00</b>
€5,000 is assessed at €2 per €1,000	<b>€10.00</b>
Weekly means	<b>€20.00</b>

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

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

### 10. How do I get my payment?

One-Parent Family Payment can be paid weekly:

- by direct payment into your current, deposit or savings account in a financial institution. This account must be a current, deposit or savings account, **not** a mortgage account,
- or**
- at your local post office by Social Services Card. This allows you to avail of the Household Budget Scheme.

### 11. 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 7 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 qualify for a medical card from the Health Service Executive.

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

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

From 2 February 2012 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:

- Maternity Benefit,
  - Adoptive Benefit,
  - Health and Safety Benefit,
- or
- Carer's Allowance.

From the 2 February 2012 the half rate payments of Jobseeker's Benefit, Illness Benefit or Incapacity Supplement ceased.

A new provision was introduced from 2 February 2012, OFP customers may qualify for a partial rate of Jobseeker's Benefit, Illness Benefit or Incapacity Supplement in addition to their OFP payment.

The Jobseeker's Benefit, Illness Benefit or Incapacity Supplement combined with the OFP payment, must not exceed the maximum rate payable on JB for the family circumstances of the customer.

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

## 13. 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 8 for more information.

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

### **Back to Work Family Dividend**

You may qualify for Back to Work Family Dividend **instead** of your One-Parent Family Payment if you are in employment or take up employment.

For the first year (52 weeks) the rate of dividend payable is €29.80 in respect of each previously qualified child, subject to a maximum of four eligible children.

This amounts to €29.80 per qualified child, subject to a maximum payment of €119.20 per week (4 x €29.80). This will reduce to 50%, or half that amount, for the second year.

### **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.

The allowance is payable on a reducing scale over a two year period that is 100% of a person's social welfare payment in year one and 75% in year two.

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)**.

### **Community Employment Schemes**

**Since 16 January 2012** new participants on Community Welfare Employment schemes will not be able to claim another social welfare payment including One Parent Family Payment at the same time.

For existing participants on a CE scheme, the qualified child portion of that payment will discontinue from 16 January 2012. The qualified child increase will continue to be paid on OFP provided you continue to satisfy the conditions of payment.

## **14. 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.

## 15. When and how do I apply?

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** you should apply **within 3 months** of the birth of your child.

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

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

## 16. 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.

## 17. 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 17)
- 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 Social Welfare Office.

### 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 Carer's Allowance form, text FORM CARA 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>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 (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>Carer's 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>Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner Non-Contributory Pension</b>	<b>SW 26</b>