

## Contents

1.	What is the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA)?	3
2.	Who can qualify for BTWEA?	3
3.	What are the benefits of BTWEA?	6
4.	How do I apply for the allowance?	8
5.	How do I get the allowance?	8
6.	Can I get any other supports?	9
7.	Where can I get more information?	10

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Qualifying conditions for our schemes change from time to time. Always check with your local Intreo Centre or with Information Services to see if qualifying conditions have changed (see page 10 for contact details).

The information in this booklet is correct at the time of publication.



## 1. What is the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA)?

If you are getting certain social welfare payments and you would like to become self-employed, the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) lets you keep a portion of your social welfare payment for 2 years. The BTWEA is only payable up to 66 years of age.

### **Note**

**You must have your business approved by your Partnership Company or a Case Officer from this Department before you start self employment.**

Back to Work Enterprise Allowance is **not** taxable. You should tell Revenue immediately if you qualify for the scheme.

## 2. Who can qualify for BTWEA?

To qualify, you must be:

- setting up a business that a Partnership Company or a Case Officer has approved in writing in advance,  
**and**
- getting one of the qualifying payments listed on page 4 for at least 9 months.

The qualifying payments are:

- Jobseeker's Benefit
- Jobseeker's Allowance (JA)
- One-Parent Family Payment (OFP)
- Jobseeker's Transitional Payment (JST)
- Blind Pension
- Disability Allowance
- Carer's Allowance (having stopped caring duties)
- Farm Assist
- Invalidity Pension
- Incapacity Supplement
- Pre-Retirement Allowance
- Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension
- Deserted Wife's Benefit or Allowance
- Prisoner's Wife's Allowance

A person must be getting Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance (with an underlying entitlement of Jobseeker's Allowance)\* for at least 9 months (234 days). If there is no Jobseeker's Allowance entitlement, the qualifying period is two out of the last 3 years on a qualifying payment,

or

- Qualifying from Illness Benefit (3 out of the last 5 years in receipt of a qualifying social welfare payment),

or

- Combination of OFP/JST/JA for 9 months (234 days).

### Note

- **We count time spent studying or training on full-time SOLAS (formerly FÁS) and Fáilte Ireland training courses, Community Employment, Social Economy Programme, Job Initiative, Rural Social Scheme, Fastrack to Information Technology (FIT), Back to Education Scheme or Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme (VTOS), as long as**

**you got one of the above payments before you started this study or training. The applicant must re-establish an entitlement to a qualifying payment as the BTWEA rate paid is based on this figure.**

- We also count time spent on the Community Services Programme if you received one of the listed social welfare payments for at least half the qualifying period.**
- Periods spent receiving Supplementary Welfare Allowance and direct provision count towards the qualifying period as long as you establish an entitlement to a relevant social welfare payment before starting the scheme.**

In addition, you may qualify in the following two cases:

- You are a qualified adult of an eligible claimant and the claimant transfers their entitlements to you. You then become self-employed and the original claimant becomes the qualified adult on your Back to Work Enterprise Allowance claim. If the original claimant is entitled to credits they may continue to claim credits. BTWEA cannot be paid at the same time as another social welfare payment. If the original claimant, now the qualified adult, decides to claim another social welfare payment, you must stop claiming BTWEA.

**or**

- You have been released from prison recently.  
Time spent in prison can be taken or count towards the qualifying period for the BTWEA scheme provided an entitlement to a relevant social welfare payment is established prior to commencement of employment.

### 3. What are the benefits of BTWEA?

You get your social welfare payment for 2 years (including any increases for a qualified adult and qualified children) as follows:

- 100% of your weekly social welfare payment for the first year **and**
- 75% for the second year.

#### **Example**

**If you were getting a jobseeker's payment of €193.00 a week, you will receive the following weekly payment while on BTWEA:**

<b>Year 1</b>	—————→	<b>€193.00</b>
<b>Year 2</b>	—————→	<b>€144.75</b>

You may also qualify for a number of 'secondary benefits' listed below.

#### **Secondary benefits from the Department of Social Protection:**

- Fuel Allowance
- Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance
- Rent and Mortgage Interest Supplement (see note on page 7)
- Diet Supplement

#### **Secondary benefits from the Health Service Executive include:**

- Medical card

**Secondary benefits from your local authority include:**

- Differential rents

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

**Extra Benefits:**

Participants in the scheme may keep any secondary benefits they were getting before such as Fuel Allowance and Medical Card provided they satisfy a means test.

Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, Diet Supplement, Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme.

You may be able to keep your secondary benefits, such as Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement, in certain circumstances.

If you are getting Rent Supplement or Mortgage Interest Supplement, you should contact the Officer dealing with your claim so your entitlements can be clarified.

**Note**

**You do not have to pay tax or PRSI on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, but you may have to pay tax and PRSI on the income from self-employment.**

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

**Voluntary Contributions**

**If your income from self-employment is not subject to PRSI, it may benefit you to pay Voluntary Contributions to protect your entitlement to certain social welfare benefits in the future.**

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

## 4. How do I apply for the allowance?

If you wish to become self-employed under this scheme, complete application form **BTW 2** and send it to:

- your **local Partnership Company** (if you live in a Partnership area) for referral to the Partnership's Enterprise Officer,
- or**
- your **local Intreo Centre or Branch Office** (if you **do not** live in a Partnership area) for referral to the Case Officer.

The office will examine your proposal and may discuss certain aspects of the project with you. Do **not** begin self-employment until you have received written approval from the Partnership Company or this Department.

You must register as self-employed with Revenue. You can do this by contacting your local Tax Office.

If your self-employment ends or you take up employment, you must tell us immediately.

## 5. How do I get the allowance?

You can get Back to Work Enterprise Allowance by direct payment each week into your account in a financial institution. This account must be a current, deposit or savings account, **not** a mortgage account.



## 6. Can I get any other supports?

Enterprise support Grant provides financial support to jobseekers that are approved and awarded/started on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance or Short Term Enterprise Allowance. You should contact your Case Officer to have the Enterprise Support Grant approved.

You should do a 'Start Your Own Business Course' before you begin self-employment.

## 7. Where can I get more information?

For more information on the BTWEA contact:

### **Employment Support Services**

Department of Social Protection  
Social Welfare Services  
Government Buildings  
Shannon Lodge  
Carrick-on-Shannon  
Co. Leitrim

Telephone: **(071) 96 72698**,

or

- your local Integrated Development Company,
- or
- your local Intreo Centre or Branch Office.

For information booklets, application forms and more information on social welfare services:

- Log on to **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 Intreo Centre, Branch 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 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>Carer's Support Grant</b>	<b>FORM CSG</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>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>