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**AN BILLE LEASA SHÓISIALAIGH 2009**  
**SOCIAL WELFARE BILL 2009**

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**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

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*Introduction*

This Bill provides for certain amendments to the social welfare code, as announced in the Minister for Finance's Budget Statement of 7 April 2009. These measures include amendments to PRSI, the Jobseeker's Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance and Supplementary Welfare Allowance schemes and the Early Childcare Supplement. It also provides for an amendment to the Domiciliary Care Allowance scheme in respect of late claims. The Bill further provides for amendments to the Health Contributions Act 1979.

*Main Provisions*

The Bill comprises 3 Parts and contains 12 sections.

**Part 1 — Preliminary and General**

*Section 1* provides for the short title and construction of the Bill.

*Section 2* contains the definitions of certain terms as they apply in the Bill.

**Part 2 — Amendments to the Social Welfare Acts**

*PRSI changes*

*Sections 3* and *4* of the Bill provide for adjustments to PRSI as announced in the Budget, increasing the earnings ceiling applicable to employees and optional contributors, from €52,000 to €75,036 per annum.

*Jobseeker's Benefit*

*Section 5* provides for an amendment to customer activation and information profiling for Jobseeker's Benefit. It also provides for a new short-term support scheme under the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme for a person who qualifies for Jobseeker's Benefit or who qualifies for statutory redundancy.

*Jobseeker's Allowance*

*Section 6* provides for an amendment to customer activation and information profiling for Jobseeker's Allowance. It also provides for an amendment to the rate of Jobseeker's Allowance payable to persons aged 18 and 19 years, where that person does not have a

qualified child. This section also provides for proportional adjustments in respect of the amount payable to a person in this category in respect of his or her qualified adult.

#### *Supplementary Welfare Allowance*

*Section 7* provides for amendment to the provisions governing Supplementary Welfare Allowance and Rent Supplement by providing for a revised rate of payment to persons under the age of 20 years, where that person does not have a qualified child and incorporating in primary legislation certain circumstances in which the Supplement may be payable.

#### *Early Childcare Supplement*

*Section 8* provides for amendments to the Early Childcare Supplement, by reducing the annual amount of the payment to €498, and a consequent reduction in the monthly rate to €41.50. These rates will come into effect from 1 May 2009. This section further provides for the abolition of the Supplement from 1 January 2010.

#### *Claims*

*Section 9* provides for the making of regulations setting out the information to be provided by claimants when making a claim for benefit.

#### *Domiciliary Care Allowance*

*Section 10* provides for amendment to the Domiciliary Care Allowance scheme to facilitate payment of up to 6 months arrears in the case of a late claim. This is in line with recent practice when the scheme was administered by the Health Service Executive. The Scheme was transferred to the Department of Social and Family Affairs in April 2009.

#### *Revised rates of payment*

*Section 11* provides for revised rates of payment under sections 6 and 7 above.

### **Part 3 — Amendments to Health Contributions Act 1979**

#### *Amendments to Health Contributions Act*

*Section 12* amends the Health Contributions Act 1979, by providing for an increase in the rate of the contribution, and lowering the earnings threshold. This section also provides for the aggregation of earnings, emoluments and income for the purpose of calculation of contribution.

*An Roinn Gnóthaí Sóisialacha agus Teaghlaigh,  
Aibreán, 2009.*