



## Main Social Welfare Changes and Rates of Payments

### Budget 2017 – Department of Social Protection

*€19.85 billion to be spent in 2017 for 2.05m beneficiaries*

**€5 increase in max. rate of all weekly payments for pensioners, carers, people with disabilities, widows, lone parents, jobseekers etc. 1.5 million beneficiaries**

**Invalidity Pension eligibility will be extended to the self-employed from December 2017 and for Treatment Benefits, such as Dental, Optical and Hearing, from March 2017**

**Lone parents package including new €500 Cost of Education Allowance**

**More Dental and Optical Benefits for all insured employees and self-employed from October**

**Proportionate increases for people in receipt of reduced rate payments and for qualified adult dependants**

**50,000 extra children to benefit from School Meals**

**Reversal of cuts to Farm Assist & 500 additional places on the Rural Social Scheme**

**€2 million for pre-activation supports for people with disabilities**

**Young Jobseekers: full Back to Education Allowance, lower contributions to Rent Supplement**

**Christmas Bonus of 85% will be paid in early December to 1.2 million recipients**

#### Improvements in weekly pensions

- €5 increase in all maximum weekly pension payments including State Pension Contributory and Non-Contributory, Widow's, Widower's, Surviving Civil Partner's and Disablement Pension with proportionate increases for those on reduced rates of payment.
- Proportionate increases in weekly payments for qualified adult dependants.

#### Improvements in weekly payments

- €5 increase in all maximum weekly benefits and allowances including Maternity/Paternity /Adoptive Benefits, Illness Benefit, Blind Pension, Carer's Benefit, Carer's Allowance, Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension, One Parent Family Payment, Jobseeker's Benefit, Jobseeker's Allowance and Farm Assist with proportionate increases for people in receipt of reduced rate payments. This includes increases in employment programmes such as CE, TÚS and Rural Social Scheme.
- Proportionate increases in weekly payments for qualified adult dependants.

## Supports for Self-Employed PRSI Contributors

- Invalidity Pension is being extended to self-employed workers from December 2017.
- Dental and Optical Benefits and the Medical Appliances scheme (hearing aids) will be extended to self-employed workers from March 2017.
- Dental Benefit will be expanded in October for all insured employees and the self-employed.
- Optical Benefits will be expanded in October for all insured workers including the self-employed to cover the cost of glasses or a contribution towards the cost, depending on customer choice.
- Jobseekers taking up self-employment will be able to access the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance after 9 months, down from 12 months.
- Rate of Class S PRSI unchanged in 2017.

## Supporting Lone Parents

- €5 increase to the One Parent Family Payment, Jobseeker's Transition Payment and Back to Education Allowance.
- Plus Income disregard for parents getting One Parent Family Payment and Jobseeker's Transition to be increased to €110 from €90 per week - January. (These two combined measures represent a weekly increase of up to €15 for those earning over €90 per week.)
- New €500 Cost of Education Allowance per annum for parents, including lone parents, in receipt of Back to Education Allowance.

## Children

- Government focus in this Budget on services – childcare, medical cards and education.
- Funding for School Meals is being increased to €47.7 million in 2017, up €5.7 million on 2016, including over 50,000 extra children to benefit from school meals.
- Special increase of €15 in the weekly rate of Guardian's Contributory and Non-Contributory payments from €161 to €176.

## Rural Ireland

- Farm income and other income from off-farm self-employment to be assessed at **70%**, down from 100%, for Farm Assist, with additional annual disregard of €254 for each of the first two children and €381 for the third and other children.
- Rural Social Scheme – 500 additional places in 2017, increasing overall number to 3,100.
- €5 increase in maximum weekly rate of Farm Assist and €3.30 increase for adult dependants.
- Invalidity Pension is being extended to the self-employed including farmers – December 2017.
- Entitlement to Dental and Optical Benefits for farmers – March 2017.
- Farmers to qualify for extended range of Dental and Optical Benefits from October 2017.

### Jobseeker Supports

- Back to Education Allowance to increase by €33 per week from €160 to €193 for jobseekers aged under 26 - September 2017.
- Back to Work Enterprise Allowance will become available more quickly after becoming unemployed, after nine months (from 12 months).
- Personal rent contribution to be reduced from €30 to €10 per week for people aged 18-24 who are receiving Jobseeker's Allowance of €100 per week and from €30 to €20 for those who are receiving €144 and €160 per week - January 2017.

### Continued Support for Older People

- €5 increase in the maximum rate of all weekly welfare payments for pensioners aged 66 and over with proportionate increases for adult dependants and those on reduced rates.
- Living Alone Allowance and Over 80 Age Allowance will be protected.
- Fuel Allowances, Household Benefits and Free Travel will be protected.

### Supports for Carers

- Carer's Allowance to continue to be paid for a period of 12 weeks when the person being cared for moves permanently into residential care/nursing home – January.
- €5 increase in maximum rate of Carer's Benefit and Carer's Allowance weekly payment.
- Carers will continue to get the annual Carer's Support Grant of €1,700 for each care recipient.

### Supports for People with Disabilities

- Funding of €2 million to be provided for Projects which provide pre-activation supports for people with disabilities in 2017.
- €5 increase in weekly rates of Invalidity Pension, Disability Allowance, Blind Pension, Illness Benefit, Disablement Pension.

### Community Services Programme

- Additional €1 million in funding for the nationwide Community Services Programme in 2017, increasing it to €46 million. The Programme supports voluntary and community companies to provide local services to their communities.

### Christmas Bonus to be paid to 1.2 million people this year

#### €221 million to be paid to long-term welfare recipients in December

- An 85% Christmas Bonus will be paid this December to recipients of a long-term Social Welfare payment (minimum payment of €20).

#### People in receipt of the following payments will receive the Bonus:

- State Pensions and Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's Pensions
- Invalidity Pension, Blind Pension, Disability Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Domiciliary Care Allowance, Guardian's payments.
- Long-term Jobseeker's Allowance including Jobseeker's Transition Payment, One Parent Family Payment, Deserted Wife's Benefit and Allowance, Farm Assist
- Back to Work Allowance, Community Employment, Rural Social Scheme, TÚS, Gateway, Job Initiative.

For more information check [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) and [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie). Telephone the Department of Social Protection on 071-9193302 or 1890 66 22 44 (LoCall) from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Telephone the Citizens Information Phone Service on 0761 07 4000, 9am - 8pm Monday to Friday. Contact your local Intreo Centre, Social Welfare Office or Citizens Information Centre. The rates charged for 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary among different service providers. This Fact Sheet is intended as a guide only and does not purport to be a legal interpretation.



<u>Maximum Weekly Rates</u> Note: Commencement date of rate increases is March 2017	Personal Rate		Increase for a Qualified Adult		Qualified Child Increase
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016/2017
<u>Social Insurance Payments</u>					
<b>State Pension (Contributory)</b>	€	€	€	€	€
- Under Age 80	233.30	238.30	155.50 *	158.80 *	29.80
- Aged 80 and over	243.30	248.30	209.00**	213.50**	29.80
<b>Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension/Deserted Wife's Benefit</b>					
- Under Age 66	193.50	198.50			
- Aged 66 and under Age 80	233.30	238.30			
- Aged 80 and over	243.30	248.30			29.80
<b>Invalidity Pension</b>	193.50	198.50	138.10	141.70	29.80
<b>Carer's Benefit/Constant Attendance Allowance</b>	205.00	210.00			29.80
<b>Disablement Benefit</b>	219.00	224.00			
<b>Jobseeker's/Illness/Health &amp; Safety/Injury Benefit</b>	188.00	193.00	124.80	128.10	29.80
<b>Maternity/Adoptive Benefit/Paternity</b>	230.00	235.00			
<b>Death Benefit</b>					
- Under Age 66	218.50	223.50			29.80
- Aged 66 and under Age 80	237.70	242.70			29.80
- Aged 80 and over	247.70	252.70			29.80

<u>Social Assistance Payments</u>					
<b>State Pension (Non-Contributory)</b>					
- Aged 66 and under Age 80	222.00	227.00	146.70	150.00	29.80
- Aged 80 and over	232.00	237.00			29.80
<b>Carer's Allowance</b>					
- Under Age 66	204.00	209.00			29.80
- Aged 66 and over	242.00	247.00			29.80
<b>Disability Allowance/Blind Pension</b>	188.00	193.00	124.80	128.10	29.80
<b>Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's (Non-Contributory) Pension</b>	188.00	193.00			
<b>One-Parent Family Payment</b>	188.00	193.00			29.80
<b>Pre-Retirement/Deserted Wife's Allowance</b>	188.00	193.00	124.80	128.10	29.80
<b>Jobseeker's Allowance - Aged 26 or over</b>	188.00	193.00	124.80	128.10	29.80
- Aged 25	144.00	147.80	124.80	128.10	29.80
- Aged 18 -24	100.00	102.70	100.00	102.70	29.80
<b>Supplementary Welfare Allowance - Aged 26 or over</b>	186.00	191.00	124.80	128.10	29.80
- Aged 25	144.00	147.80	124.80	128.10	29.80
- Aged 18 -24	100.00	102.70	100.00	102.70	29.80
<b>Farm Assist</b>	188.00	193.00	124.80	128.10	29.80

\* for those under age 66 years

\*\* for those aged 66 or over

Family Income Supplement (FIS)		
Family Size	2016 Income Limit	2017 Income Limit
1 child	€511	€511
2 children	€612	€612
3 children	€713	€713
4 children	€834	€834
5 children	€960	€960
6 children	€1,076	€1,076
7 children	€1,212	€1,212
8 children or more	€1,308	€1,308

The level of FIS payment will continue to be based on 60% of the shortfall between net weekly family income and the applicable weekly family threshold.

Child Benefit		
	2016 Rate	2017 Rate
Monthly Rate	€140 per child	€140 per child

Twins – Child Benefit is paid at one and half times (150%) the normal monthly rate for each child.  
All other multiple births – Child Benefit is paid at double (200%) the normal monthly rate for each child.

Other Social Welfare Payments		
	2016 weekly	2017 weekly
Guardian's Payment (Contributory)	€161.00	€176.00
Guardian's Payment (Non-Contributory)	€161.00	€176.00

	2016 monthly	2017 monthly
Domiciliary Care Allowance	€309.50	€309.50

	2016 annually	2017 annually
Carer's Support Grant	€1,700	€1,700

	2016 - once off payment	2017 - once off payment
Widowed or Surviving Civil Partner Grant	€6,000	€6,000

	2016 weekly	2017 weekly
Fuel Allowance	€22.50	€22.50