



4,500 PEOPLE TO BENEFIT FROM
IMPROVEMENTS TO THE CARER'S
ALLOWANCE

It is expected that 4,500 people will benefit from changes in the Carer's Allowance coming into effect this week. Changes in income disregards will see 1,700 new carers qualifying for a payment and 2,800 existing carers receiving an increased payment. A single person can now have an income of €210 per week and a couple can have €420 per week, without effecting their payment.

Announcing the improvements, Mary Coughlan TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs said - "These improvements will make a real difference to Carers. For example, as a result of the changes a couple with two children, earning €24,000 can qualify for the maximum rate of Carer's Allowance. Such a couple earning nearly €40,000 will still get a payment, including the Respite Care Grant."

"I wish to acknowledge the valuable and unheralded work done by carers. This government has committed itself to helping Carers. In the Agreed Programme for Government we pledged to expand the income limits for the Carer's Allowance so that all those on average industrial incomes could qualify. These improvements are in line with that promise," added Minister Coughlan.



The Carer's Allowance is a means tested payment for carers on low incomes who live with and look after certain people in need of full-time care and attention. Carer's receiving the payment can work for up to 10 hours per week, after getting approval from the Department. The weekly income disregard (the amount a person can earn before it effects their payment) for a single person is being increased from €191 to €210 and that for a couple from €382 to €420. These increases will cost more than €4m this year and almost €5.5m in a full year. Last year €160m was spent on the allowance and 20,518 people are receiving the Carer's Allowance at present.

People receiving the allowance also receive an annual Respite Care Grant at the start of June. This year the grant is being increased by €100 to €735. People who care for more than one person will receive an increased grant of €1,470.

ENDS

11th April, 2003



Note for News Editors

The Carer's Allowance is a means tested payment for carers on low incomes who live with and look after certain people in need of full-time care and attention. Carer's receiving the payment can work for up to 10 hours per week, after getting approval from the Department. Carers will normally reside with the person being cared for. In exceptional cases non-resident Carers may qualify for the payment.

The payment is made up of a personal rate and extra amounts for child dependants. Entitlement to Carer's Allowance also qualifies people for the annual Respite Care Grant and free schemes such as a free travel pass, free television allowance and the telephone allowance. People providing care to more than one person, may be entitled to up to an extra 50% of the maximum rate of Carers Allowance each week.

Current weekly Carer's Allowance payment rates

		Caring for One Person €	Caring for more than one person €
Maximum Rate		129.60	194.40
<i>Increases</i>			
For Carers aged 66 or over		18.20	27.30
Each Child Dependant	Full Rate*	16.80	16.80
	Half Rate**	8.40	8.40



Annual Respite Care Grant		735.00	1,470.00
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*Payable if the carer is single, widowed or separated

** Payable if the carer is living with their spouse/partner