



1.8 million people benefited from a weekly social welfare payment at the end of 2008

Almost 1.8 million people were benefiting from a weekly social welfare payment at the end of 2008, ranging from pensioners to jobseekers as well as carers to those in receipt of disability payments. Weekly payments are made to some 1.2 million people as well as payment in respect of a further 145,200 adult dependants and over 445,700 children.

Details of these and other statistics on social welfare supports and services can be found in the 26th Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services which was published today.

The report shows that social welfare expenditure increased to over €17.8 billion in 2008, an increase of almost 15% on the previous year.

Commenting on the report today, Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin T.D. said **“these figures show the Government’s commitment to caring and supporting our citizens in participating in society at all levels. From birth through life stages to death, our system of social supports administered by the Department helps over 42% of the population at any one time.**

Behind each and every one of these statistics is a real person or family, which makes it all the more important for us to see that delivering our service is not just about numbers. The work of the Department of Social and Family Affairs affects the lives and well-being of a huge proportion of our population, particularly in these challenging times.”

Key Social and Family Affairs statistics in 2008:

- Over 1.2 million people were in receipt of a weekly Social Welfare payment, which was paid in respect of 1.8 million beneficiaries.
- There was over €5.3 billion spent on supports for people of working age, an increase of almost 25% on the previous year. Within this, expenditure on Jobseekers supports increased by 48% rising to €2.1 billion.
- Expenditure on State Pensions increased by 10.9% to €4.3 billion. Payments were made to over 364,000 people in this area.



Department of Social and Family Affairs

- Over 596,100 families received a monthly Child Benefit payment, which was paid in respect of 1,141,938 children. Expenditure on Child Benefit increased by 10.0% to €2.5 billion during 2008.
- Family Income Supplement was paid to 27,798 families, an increase 21.8% on the previous year and benefiting over 58,000 children, 22.1% more than 2007. Expenditure on Family Income Supplement increased by 21.6% to €170 million.
- Expenditure on Carer's Allowance and Carer's Benefit increased by 24.6% and 25.2% respectively. The numbers in receipt of a Carer's payment increased from 35,147 to 45,818, an increase of 30.4%;

The number of PPSN (Personal Public Service Numbers) issued in 2008 dropped for the first time since 2004, with a total of 247,325 issued last year. This represents over 58,500 less issued to people coming from the EU to live and work in Ireland than in 2007.

The report gives detailed breakdown of many of the Departments schemes on county by county breakdown or by age profile.

The main areas of expenditure by programme group as a percentage of overall spending:

- Older People (24.1%)
- Widows, Widowers and One Parent Families (14%)
- Illness, Disability and Caring (18.5%)
- Jobseeker's Supports (11.8%) and
- Child related Payments (15.7%)
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance (4.5%)
- Employment Supports (2.3%).

Administration of the social welfare system accounted for 3.3% of the total expenditure.

Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2008 is available at: <http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Policy/ResearchSurveysAndStatistics/Pages/StatInfoReportsIndex.aspx>

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