



## An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí Department of Social Protection

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**Over 2 million social welfare claims processed and 85.3 million payments made in 2010**

### ***Minister Burton publishes Department of Social Protection Annual Report 2010 and Statistical Information of Social Welfare Services 2010***

"Almost 2.2 million people were benefiting from a weekly social welfare payment at the end of 2010. My Department processed over 2 million claims and made over 85.3 million payments last year. Behind these statistics is a wide range of people who are supported by my Department, including families, workers, jobseekers, people with disabilities, carers and pensioners", said the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD as she published her Department's Annual Report 2010 and the 28<sup>th</sup> Statistical Information of Social Welfare Services report.

Minister Burton noted that weekly payments are made to over 1.4 million people as well as payments in respect of a further 190,000 qualified adults and over 494,500 children. The day-to-day activities of the Department of Social Protection include:

- some 50 separate schemes and services;
- over 6.5 million telephone calls to the Department;
- almost 935,000 reviews of claims in payment as part of the Department's fraud control activity; and
- processing applications for Personal Public Service Numbers for customers from some 140 countries

Commenting on the two reports, Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD said: "Supports administered by my Department provide for the complex and multi-faceted needs of people at every stage of life. Continuing to reflect the trend of recent years and re-affirming the Government's commitment to the welfare of all those in need of support, social welfare programme expenditure increased to €20.8 billion in 2010 - an increase of 1.5% over the previous year."

Some key Social Protection statistics in 2010 include:

- Expenditure on State Pensions, which increased by 1% to just over €4.6 billion. Payments were made to almost 394,000 people in this area;
- 591,432 families received a monthly Child Benefit payment which was paid in respect of 1,124,003 children. Expenditure on Child Benefit decreased by 11.3% to just over €2.2 billion.



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- Family Income Supplement was paid to 28,223 families, 8.7% more than the previous year and benefiting over 62,000 children, an increase of 11.7% on 2009.
- Expenditure on Family Income Supplement increased by 11.3% to €186 million;
- Expenditure on Carer's Allowance remained stable, decreasing by 0.1% while expenditure on Carer's Benefit decreased by 12.9%. The numbers in receipt of a Carer's payment increased from 50,140 to 52,219, an increase of 4.1%;

Responsibility for the Rural Social Scheme and Community Services Programme, previously administered by the Department of Community, Equality and the Gaeltacht transferred to the Department of Social Protection during 2010.

Minister Burton continued: "In light of our country's changed economic circumstances, the evolving needs of the Department's customers and the new areas of responsibility assigned to my Department, which this year will include the Employment and Community Employment Services of FÁS and the Community Welfare Service, we will be focusing our interventions on assisting customers to find employment or to prepare themselves for entry into the labour market by accessing career advice, training, education, work experience and job placement."

Significant pieces of work completed by the Department of Social Protection in 2010 include:

- The legislative changes required to introduce civil partnership into the social welfare code were provided for in the Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2010. The first civil partnership was registered on 7 February 2011.
- The publication of three strategic policy reports: A Policy and Value for Money Review of Child Income Support and associated spending programmes; Report on the desirability and feasibility of introducing a single social assistance payment for people of working age; and Value for Money Review of the Disability Allowance scheme. The three reports share common themes with the main objective being the improvement of outcomes for people and their families reliant on the support of the social protection system.
- The publication of the National Pensions Framework, published in March 2010, which sets out plans for future pension reform and encompasses all aspects of pensions, from social welfare to private occupational pensions and public sector pension reform.



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- Changes to the One-Parent Family Payment were introduced in the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2010, bring Ireland's support for lone parents more in line with international provisions, where there is a general movement away from long-term and passive income support.

The Department's Annual Report 2010 and Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2010 are available at [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie).

**Note for Editors**

The Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2010 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 in 2010 were:

- Older People (22.1%)
- Widows, Widowers and One Parent Families (12.3%)
- Illness, Disability and Caring (16.6%)
- Jobseeker's Supports (19.6%) and
- Child related Payments (12.7%)
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance (4.6%)
- Employment Supports (2.9%).

Administration of the social protection system accounted for 2.8% of the total expenditure.

At the end of 2010, the Department of Social Protection had 5,175 staff, which equates to 4,836 full-time equivalent posts.

The Department's headquarters offices are located in Buncrana, Carrick-on-Shannon, Dublin, Dundalk, Letterkenny, Longford, Roscommon, Sligo, Tubbercurry and Waterford. The Department also has a nationwide network of some 125 social welfare local and branch offices.

**PRESS RELEASE ENDS**