



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Employment Affairs
and Social Protection

Minister Doherty Renews Social Welfare Payments Contract with An Post for 2019

Thursday, 17 January, 2019: Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty, T.D., today renewed her Department's contract with An Post to provide social welfare payments including pensions and Child Benefit.

Visiting the GPO in Dublin, the Minister formally signed the contract for An Post to provide services for the year ahead, with David McRedmond, CEO of An Post signing on behalf of An Post. The social welfare contract accounts for over **€51 million** in payment services. In addition, the Department paid over **€10 million** for postal services to An Post in 2018.

Minister Doherty re-iterated today the Government's commitment to the role of the post office network nationwide. Her Department, she said, is committed to retaining the current level of service for welfare recipients in any new contract. This includes the obligation to maintain a network of outlets so as to ensure that the vast majority of welfare clients are within 15km of an outlet in a rural area.

Minister Doherty said:

“The post office network is an important channel for the delivery of social welfare services – particularly in rural Ireland. While other methods of payment are becoming more available to welfare recipients, I believe fundamentally that people should have choice in how they receive these payments. An Post has provided an excellent service - managing millions of social welfare payments to thousands of welfare clients, many of whom appreciate the opportunity to collect their payments in cash over the counter. Therefore, I am pleased today to renew my Department's contract with An Post, and to continue its provision of a broad range of social welfare payments again this year.”

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection makes **approximately 79 million** social welfare payments each year of which **over 30 million** are paid in cash through the post office network. This represents approximately **40%** of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection's annual payments.

The Department's current contract allows for the extension of the term of the current contract on an annual basis up to the end of 2019. Under EU and national procurement rules, the

Department is required to go to public tender for the provision of cash services from 1 January 2020. The Department is currently making the necessary preparations to put this contract out to public tender in the coming months.

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