

## **Minister Doherty renews €51M social welfare contract with An Post**

### **An Post processed 33.6 million social welfare payments in 2017**

**Thursday, 19 April, 2018:** Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection Regina Doherty, T.D. has today renewed her Department's contract with An Post to provide pensions, Child Benefit and other social welfare payments in cash at Post Offices.

The Minister formally signed the contract for An Post to provide services for the year ahead at the GPO on O'Connell Street in Dublin. David Mc Redmond, CEO of An Post signed on behalf of An Post. Last year's contract amounted to €51 million for 33.6 million payments, and the value of the 2018 contract is expected to match that.

The current terms of the contract between the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and An Post were agreed in 2013 for an initial two year period, with an option to extend annually up to 2019.

Minister Doherty used the opportunity to re-affirm Government policy which sees the post office network as a key piece of the country's financial and social infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. Accordingly, the Programme for a Partnership Government commits to actively encourage payment at post offices.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection gives effect to this commitment by renewing the current cash services contract with An Post and also advising social welfare customers who are making new claims or seeking to change their payment arrangements that they can choose between payment at the post office or by electronic funds transfer. In the case of most new jobseeker claim customers the default payment option is through the post office network.

Minister Doherty said:

**"I'm very pleased to renew my Department's contract with An Post to provide pensions, Child Benefit and other social welfare payments for the year ahead. This is an important service for our clients, many of whom value the opportunity to receive their payments in cash over the counter. An astonishing 33.6 million social welfare payments were made through post offices last year.**

**"This is also an opportunity for me to thank An Post and its staff for their trojan work during the week of Storm Emma, when they made sure to keep services open and make payments to our clients. They were particularly helpful when I set out to make an additional fuel payment to 368,000 households around the country."**

**Ends**

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