



**An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection**

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2.2 million people benefited from a weekly social welfare payment at the end of 2011

Minister Burton publishes Department of Social Protection Annual Report 2011 and Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2011

At the end of 2011 weekly payments were made to over 1.4 million people and when qualified adults and children were included, over 2.2 million people benefited each week. The Department of Social Protection processed over 2.2 million claims and made over 87.6 million scheme payments last year. The total expenditure by the Department in 2011 was almost €21 billion.

“Behind each and every one of these statistics is a real person or family. Delivering the Department’s services is not just about numbers but about affecting the daily lives and wellbeing of all our citizens particularly in these challenging times”, said the Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD as she published her Department’s Annual Report 2011 and the 29th Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2011.

The Minister continued: **“These figures demonstrate the scale of my Department’s work, administering over 70 separate schemes and services which impact on the lives of almost every person in the State. The Department has embarked on a transformation process which, in**



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2011, included the integration of the former Community Welfare Service into my Department, the transfer of responsibility for the processing of claims under the Redundancy and Insolvency Payment Schemes, the transfer of responsibility for Social Inclusion and, preparations for the transfer of over 700 staff in Employment Services and Community Employment Services from FÁS in January 2012.”

Minister Burton noted that the day-to-day activities of the Department of Social Protection included:

- 2.2 million applications processed;
- 87.6 million scheme payments made;
- 982,000 control reviews;
- 6.8 million telephone calls answered;
- 153,000 PPS numbers allocated.

Some key Social Protection statistics in 2011 include:

- Expenditure on State Pensions, which increased by 3.3% to just over €6 billion. Payments were made to over 522,000 people in this area;
- Expenditure on Working Age Employment Supports increased by 186.5% to almost €860m overall in 2011. When additional expenditure on FÁS Employment Supports is discounted (Their budgets were transferred to the Department in 2011), the increase in expenditure for the other schemes was 45%;
- Expenditure on Jobseeker payments (Jobseeker’s Allowance and Jobseeker’s Benefit) decreased by 4.7% to over €3.9 billion, due to 2011 budget changes and a 22.2% decrease in the number of recipients of the weekly Jobseekers Benefit payment. Overall, 379,973 people were in receipt of a weekly Jobseekers payment.



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- Over 597,000 families received a monthly Child Benefit payment which was paid in respect of over 1,136,000 children. Due to 2011 budget changes expenditure on Child Benefit decreased by 6.2% to just under €2.1 billion;
- Expenditure on Carer's Allowance increased by 1.1% while expenditure on Carer's Benefit decreased by 6.9%. The numbers in receipt of a Carer's payment increased by 2.1% to 53,300;
- There were 24,666 recipients of the Back to Education allowance, up 16.6% from last year. Expenditure on this scheme in 2011 increased by 12% to almost €202 million.
- Family Income Supplement was paid to over 28,800 families, 2.3% more than the previous year, and benefiting almost 65,300 children. Expenditure on Family Income Supplement increased by 10% to almost €205 million;

Significant pieces of work by the Department of Social Protection in 2011 include:

- JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme was launched in June 2011. By the end of the year over 3,600 interns were selected by host organisations and in excess of 5,000 internships were posted on the JobBridge website. **(To date over 8,700 people have availed of the Scheme.)**
- The establishment of the National Employment and Entitlements Service (NEES), which integrates benefit payments services and employment services within the Department;
- The launch of a new fraud initiative, Fraud Initiative 2011-2013;

The Department's Annual Report 2011 and Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2011 are available at www.welfare.ie.

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Note for Editors

The Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services 2011 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 2011 were:

- Pensions (29.1%)
- Working Age Income Supports (29.5%)
- Working Age Employment Supports (4.1%)
- Illness, Disability and Caring (16.4%)
- Children (11.6%)
- Supplementary Payments (6.3%)

Administration of the social protection system accounted for 3% of the total expenditure. (Over €629 million out of a total of €21 billion in 2011)

At the end of 2011, the Department of Social Protection had 6,247 staff, which equates to 5,892 full-time equivalent posts. This includes over 1,000 Community Welfare Services staff formerly based in the HSE who transferred into the Department on 1 October 2011.

The Department's headquarters offices are located in Buncrana, Carrick-on-Shannon, Dublin, Dundalk, Letterkenny, Longford, Roscommon, Sligo and Waterford. The Department also has a nationwide network of some 125 social welfare local and branch offices as well as a number of former FÁS and HSE office premises which are now under the remit of the Department.

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