



Staff in Social Welfare offices 'working flat' out to process jobseekers claims – Hanafin

Average processing time for jobseekers benefit is two weeks

Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin T.D., today (22nd January 2009) released figures for processing times for jobseeker's payments in all of social welfare offices. **"Average processing times for Jobseeker's Benefit nationally was two weeks and Jobseeker's Allowance was five weeks last month."**

There are almost 2000 staff working in offices throughout the country processing claims, and an extra 115 posts were recently approved by Government to help the busiest offices. We are continuously monitoring our staffing levels and processing times and additional staff will be allocated in the coming months in order to deal with the increasing workloads across the country" said the Minister.

Minister Hanafin said **"staff across all of our social welfare offices are under extreme pressure coping with the increased numbers coming onto the Live Register. They are implementing measures to improve processing times and ensure that payments are made to people as speedily as possible. However, checks have to be made to ensure that people receive the correct entitlement. While some offices are experiencing a huge increase in claims, there is bound to be an impact on processing times.**

I appreciate that becoming unemployed is a very difficult time in a persons life, and for many people this is the first time in their lives they are out of work. But the Government is doing everything to, firstly, ensure that the servicers are available to support them. The Department's of Social and Family Affairs, Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Education are co-operating to create more jobs and training opportunities for those who are losing their jobs. It is important that people are



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able to access services and supports as quickly as possible” said the Minister

The Minister said while the vast bulk of claims are dealt with in only a matter of a few weeks, some offices have much longer processing times. In some cases claims are more difficult to process as means testing is required, or other checks, such as habitual residence and social insurance contributions made in other EU members states. All of this can impact on the payment of Jobseekers Allowance claims, whereas Jobseekers Benefit claims are more straightforward as they are based on contributions record.

The Minister released details of all the Social Welfare Local Offices and Branch Offices processing times (spreadsheet attached), which shows the national average is 2.07 weeks for Jobseekers Benefit and 5.31 weeks for Jobseekers Allowance.

Anyone who is under financial pressure while awaiting a decision on their claim for a Jobseeker’s payment can apply to their local Community Welfare Officer for Supplementary Welfare Allowance which is subject to a means test and qualifying conditions.

ENDS



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Average Processing time (in weeks) for claims for Jobseeker's Benefit and Allowance on the Live Register - December 2008			
Local Office/ Branch Office	SWLO/SWBO	Jobseekers Benefit	Jobseekers Allowance
Achill	SWLO	0	0.11
Apollo House	SWLO	2.63	4.47
Ardee	SWBO	1.91	5.16
Arklow	SWLO	3.62	6.82
Athlone	SWLO	2.04	5.95
Athy	SWBO	4.14	5.14
Balbriggan	SWBO	2.13	6.23
Ballina	SWLO	1.83	5.11
Ballinasloe	SWBO	1.39	3.86
Ballinrobe	SWBO	1.79	9.31
Ballybofey	SWBO	0.86	2.78
Ballyconnell	SWBO	1.59	10.92
Ballyfermot	SWLO	1.81	4.98
Ballymun	SWLO	1.42	3.44
Ballyshannon	SWBO	0.91	2.08
Baltinglass	SWBO	3.01	6.12
Bandon	SWBO	3.9	10.14
Bantry	SWLO	0.88	3.99
Bantry	SWBO	0.88	4.79
Belmullet	SWLO	2.08	2.44
Birr	SWBO	1.27	6.43
Bishop Square	SWLO	3.45	6.29
Blanchardstown	SWLO	2.67	7.73
Boyle	SWBO	4.02	7.66
Bray	SWLO	1.93	3.99
Buncrana	SWLO	2.28	4.95
Cahir	SWBO	1.26	1.67
Cahirciveen	SWLO	2.37	5.26
Carlow	SWLO	2.67	7.89
Carraigaline	SWLO	1.27	4.89
Carrickmacross	SWBO	1.73	5.42
Carrick-on-Shannon	SWLO	0.69	3.3
Carrick-on-Suir	SWBO	1.97	5.95
Cashel	SWBO	1.4	2.94
Castlebar	SWLO	1.08	2.15
Castleblaney	SWBO	2.15	4.61
Castlepollard	SWBO	2.33	7.18
Castlerea	SWBO	1.66	6.54
Cavan	SWLO	2.4	6.78
Claremorris	SWBO	2.27	8.08
Clifden	SWLO	0.81	1.8
Clonakilty	SWBO	3.11	11.55



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Clondalkin	SWLO	2.06	4
Clones	SWBO	1.77	3.85
Clonmel	SWLO	1.16	2.75
Cobh	SWLO	0.84	1.42
Coolock	SWLO	1.62	2.8
Cork	SWLO	3.4	8.36
Dingle	SWBO	1.72	2.58
Donegal	SWLO	1.13	1.5
Drogheda	SWLO	2.03	9.56
Dun Laoghaire	SWLO	1.9	5.54
Dundalk	SWLO	1.41	4.33
Dunfanaghy	SWLO	0.67	1.59
Dungarvan	SWBO	2.3	3.55
Dungloe	SWLO	0.78	1.28
Edenderry	SWBO	1.76	9.26
Ennis	SWLO	1.6	3.63
Enniscorthy	SWBO	1.56	6.24
Ennistymon	SWBO	1.74	4.23
Fermoy	SWBO	2.06	3.25
Finglas	SWLO	1.2	3.02
Galway	SWLO	2.59	7.58
Gorey	SWBO	2.41	5.32
Gort	SWBO	2.07	4.54
Kells	SWBO	1.65	11
Kenmare	SWLO	1.78	2.27
Kilbarrack	SWLO	1.98	3.51
Kilkenny	SWLO	1.18	5.26
Killarney	SWBO	1.83	3.42
Killorglin	SWBO	1.42	4.85
Killybegs	SWBO	0.93	1.74
Kilmallock	SWBO	1.54	2.85
Kilrush	SWBO	1.22	2.72
Kinsale	SWBO	3.5	7.36
Letterkenny	SWLO	1.87	4.17
Limerick	SWLO	2.48	6.08
Listowel	SWLO	3.01	5.75
Longford	SWLO	2.98	5.84
Loughrea	SWLO	2.21	8.12
Macroom	SWBO	2.92	4.22
Mallow	SWBO	1.79	4.78
Manorhamilton	SWLO	0.88	0.55
Maynooth	SWBO	2.77	9.75
Midleton	SWBO	3.37	9.33
Monaghan	SWBO	2.04	4.89
Muine Bheag	SWBO	3.88	10.13



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Mullingar	SWLO	2.6	5.85
Navan	SWLO	2.31	11.59
Navan Road	SWLO	1.79	5.72
Nenagh	SWBO	1.03	2.64
New Ross	SWBO	1.7	5.04
Newbridge	SWLO	3.58	5.52
Newcastle West	SWLO	1.5	2.91
Newmarket	SWBO	5.64	5.44
Nth Cumberland St.	SWLO	1.56	3.13
Nutgrove	SWLO	0.95	1.72
Portllington	SWBO	1.33	6.31
Portlaoise	SWBO	2.54	6.56
Rathdowney	SWBO	2.52	7
Roscommon	SWBO	4.29	5.2
Roscrea	SWBO	0.91	2.03
Skibbereen	SWBO	1.13	4.38
Sligo	SWLO	1.97	5.12
Swinford	SWBO	1.52	6.58
Swords	SWSC	1.79	2
Tallaght	SWLO	1.84	1.82
Thomas Street	SWLO	1.27	1.83
Thomastown	SWBO	1.99	6.36
Thurles	SWLO	0.74	1.67
Tipperary	SWLO	1.34	2.48
Tralee	SWLO	1.16	2.67
Trim	SWBO	2.19	11.49
Tuam	SWBO	3.39	12.42
Tubbercurry	SWBO	1	6.24
Tulla	SWBO	1.44	2.81
Tullamore	SWLO	1.65	7.91
Tullow	SWBO	4.53	10.25
Waterford	SWLO	1.83	3.76
Westport	SWLO	1.79	2.11
Wexford	SWLO	1.42	3.89
Wicklow	SWBO	1.82	6.97
Youghal	SWBO	1.75	6.18

SWLO - Social Welfare Local Office. These offices are operated and managed by staff of the Department of Social and Family Affairs



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SWBO - Social Welfare Branch Office. These offices are operated and managed, under a contract for services, by a Branch Manager who is required to act as an agent for the Department in the area served by the office. Branch Managers are responsible for employing their own staff and the Department has no function in this regard.