



PRESS RELEASE

23/11/09

Industrial action will affect services to the public at Social Welfare offices

Payment to some 55,000 Social Welfare customers, who were due to collect their weekly payment on Wednesday 25th November, will be delayed by one day as a result of the industrial action by the civil and public sector unions. (*Details of the particular schemes affected are outlined below*).

All offices of the Department of Social and Family Affairs will be closed to the public on Tuesday, 24th November 2009 due to the action.

All customers who were due to sign-on for Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance on 24th November at Social Welfare Local Offices or Branch Offices will not now be required to do so. The customers concerned have been notified in writing about their next signing day.

Telephone services to all of the Department's offices will not be available.

Social Welfare Branch Offices, which are operated under contract to the Department but are not staffed by civil servants, will remain open to the public to provide information and accept claims. However, there will be no signing on in these offices on that day.



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Over 1.3 million weekly payments are made to social welfare customers across all schemes, including jobseekers, one parent family payments, widows and pensioners. The vast majority of these customers receive their weekly payment by way of electronic fund transfer into a bank or financial institution, or at their nominated post office and are not affected.

Customers affected who are getting an electronic payment

Some 35,000 customers who are on short term schemes and whose weekly payment is due to be paid **into their bank or financial institution** on Wednesday 25th November will experience a delay of one day in their payment as a result of the action. The categories affected are **Maternity Benefit, Illness Benefit, a small number of Jobseekers payments and supplementary welfare payment**. Customers who are paid by Social Services Card through their **post office are not expected to be affected.**

Customers affected who are getting a payment by cheque

A further 20,000 customers who are getting a payment by cheque for **Illness Benefit, supplementary welfare payment, Maternity Benefit and small number of jobseekers** are also going to be delayed by one day.

A spokeswoman for the Department said, **“the loss of a full days processing time for a system as large as the Department of Social and Family Affairs will regrettably mean that some 55,000 customers who are in receipt of a weekly payment by cheque or directly to their financial institution on Wednesday will be delayed by one day.**



However, customers in receipt of Disability Allowance who are due to collect their payment on Wednesday 25th November are not affected by this delay.

Payments to customers on other days of the week are not expected to be delayed by the industrial action. The Department will however continue to monitor the situation and inform the public of the likely impact, if any, on services in the coming days."

Offices will re-open to the public as normal on Wednesday morning. For people seeking information about the Department's schemes and services, the Department's website (www.welfare.ie) has detailed information on the range of schemes operated.

The General Register Office at Convent Road, Roscommon and its Public Research Room at Block 7, Irish Life Centre, Dublin 1 will also be closed to the public and there will be no telephone service available. Information in relation to services of the General Register Office is available at <http://www.groireland.ie>

ENDS