



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Special Weekly Island Allowance Being Extended to Inhabitants From Other EU States

The Minister for Social Affairs, Séamus Brennan T.D., today (March 25TH 2005) announced that a special island allowance of €12.70 per week is to be paid for the first time to recipients of pensions from other EU States who are residing on any one of 33 designated islands off the Irish coastline.

Until now the payment was confined to people who were in receipt of certain Irish welfare payments. Provision has now been made in the Social Welfare Consolidation Act for the extension of the allowance to recipients of payments from other EU States who reside on a designated island.

Minister Brennan said it is anticipated that the extension of the allowance payment would add about a further 50 to the 533 people who were already in receipt of the special allowance which was introduced in 2001 in recognition of the fact that people living on islands cut off from the mainland can face considerable extra expense in availing of basic services.

A person will qualify for the allowance if he/she ordinarily lives on one of the specified islands and qualified for one of the following social welfare benefits- Old Age (Contributory or Non-Contributory Pension); Blind Pension; Retirement Pension; Invalidity Pension; Widow(er)'s (Contributory or Non-Contributory) Pension; Carer's Allowance; One Parent Family Payment; Widow(er)'s Benefit Under the Occupational Injuries Scheme.

The designated islands are : Aran Island (Donegal); Bear Island (Cork); Clear Island (Cork); Dursey Island (Cork); Foynes Island (Limerick); Gola Island (Donegal); Illaunmore (Galway); Inchaghaun (Galway); Inishbarra (Galway); Inisboffin (Donegal); Inishboffin (Galway); Inisheer (Galway); Inishfree Upper (Donegal); Inishmaan (Galway); Inishmore (Galway); Inismulcichy (also known as Coney Island), Sligo; Inishodriscol (also known as Hare Island), Cork; Inistravin (Galway); Island Roy (Donegal); Lambay Island (Dublin); Long Island (Cork); Omey Island (Galway); Sherkin Island (Cork); Tory Island (Donegal) and Whiddy Island (Cork)



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and eight Co. Mayo islands- Clare Island; Clynish Island; Innisbiggle Island; Inniscuttle Island; Inishgort, Inishlyre; Inishnakillew and Inishturk.

Minister Brennan said: "The Island Allowance is in recognition of the fact that people living on islands cut off from the mainland and, in some instances, suffering disability can face extra expense in availing of many basic services, such as hospital appointments, legal consultations, travel and so on, simply because these are not available on the island. Up to now island residents in receipt of pensions from other EU States were not entitled to the special allowance. The EU Commission had raised the legality of this and I have now ordered that the situation be changed."

The Minister added: "Many of these people are making a valued and valuable contribution to preserving and protecting island life and deserve to have their contribution recognised. Island life is one of the unique and vital elements that make up the Irish experience. From my own visits I know that life on the Islands can be a rewarding, and sometimes-difficult lifestyle, particularly for people experiencing long-term illness. By extending the allowance to include those who up to now had been excluded I want to both recognise this uniqueness and help with the difficulties."

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