



Pension Reforms Continue

Qualified Adult Allowance to be paid directly to spouse/partner of pension recipients

Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Martin Cullen TD has announced that from today (Monday 24 September 2007) payment of the Department's **Qualified Adult Allowance** on all new **State Pension claims** made, will now be made directly to the pensioner's spouse or partner. This change is in line with the commitment in the *Programme for Government* to provide 'qualified adults' (who are the wives, husbands, partners of people receiving social welfare payments), with their own direct pension payment.

This change is provided for under the Social Welfare and Pensions Act, 2007 passed in March.

Minister Martin Cullen said: "If a person is receiving a social welfare payment and has a spouse or partner to support, they may as a matter of course, also receive extra financial help from the Department by means of a Qualified Adult Allowance (QAA). The change that is being made from today relates to those who are specifically receiving a State Pension. If they are getting a State Pension and they are also receiving a QAA - as they have a partner to support - that partner will now get that Qualified Allowance made out and paid out directly to them".

The revised arrangement will apply to all new applicants for State Pension schemes with effect from today 24 September.

Martin Cullen added: "Most qualified adults are women and this initiative will be of significant benefit to them. This measure, in conjunction with special increases in QAA rates in January this year, and commitments for further increases over the



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next few years, will ensure that spouses and partners of social welfare pensioners will receive a significant direct payment equivalent to the State Pension (non-contributory).”

The Minister added: “This is an important improvement in the social welfare code that will benefit mainly women and enhance their income. It will, of course, remain open to any qualified adult to continue to receive their QAA payment through the payment made out to the main claimant”.

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Editor’s Note:

State Pension schemes comprise the following payments:

State Pension (Contributory)

or

State Pension (Non-Contributory)

or

State Pension (Transition)

The State Pension (Non Contributory) is €200 per week and the Contributory Pension is €209.30. The State Pension transition is €209.30.



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The changes to the Qualified Adult Allowance (QAA) will involve amending the existing arrangements to provide that, in the case of new claimants to the State Pension schemes, the qualified adult increase will, on a mandatory basis, be paid directly to the qualified adult.

The Department however will facilitate qualified adults who do not wish to receive a direct payment by issuing a joint payment to the main claimant.

The revised arrangements will apply to all **new applicants** for State Pension schemes with effect from today 24 September 2007.

Claims for pensions will continue to be made by the insured person in the normal way, though the Department will be seeking additional account/post office details to facilitate the direct payment to the spouse or partner.

The direct payment will continue to be made as long as the main pension remains in payment.

ENDS