



Department of Social and Family Affairs

NEW YEAR SOCIAL WELFARE INCREASES BENEFIT MORE THAN 1.5 MILLION PEOPLE

€14 SPECIAL INCREASE FOR LOWER PAYMENTS

€12 INCREASE FOR PENSIONERS

Significant increases in social welfare weekly payments, effective from next week, will benefit 1.5million people, or almost four out of every ten people in the state, Minister for Social Affairs, Séamus Brennan, TD, said today (Thursday, 29th December 2004).

A special €14 increase is being provided for 550,000 people in receipt of lower payments and qualified adult allowances for 123,000 will increase by between €7.90 and €10 per week.

A minimum increase of €12 a week is being provided for some 278,000 pensioners on full rates, with proportionate increases for a further 122,000 contributory pensioners on reduced rates

Minister Brennan said: "The increases of €14 and €12 in all weekly social welfare payments are three to four times ahead of the expected rate of inflation in 2005. We are firmly on target to meet our commitments to increase the state pension to €200 by 2007 and to achieve a rate of €150 in 2002 terms for the lowest rates of social welfare by 2007."

Minister Brennan added: "The projected level of social welfare expenditure in 2005 will be over €12.25 billion, €1 billion more than in 2004. This is more than double what was being spent in 1997. This level of expenditure is a clear demonstration of this Government's commitment to addressing the needs of people with disabilities and their carers, children, the elderly, widowed persons, the unemployed, those who are parenting alone and many others who are disadvantaged. An estimated 970,000 people on average are expected to claim weekly social welfare payments in 2005 and almost 1.5 million people, including dependants, will benefit from these payments. Overall, the €12.5 billion budget of my Department means that for every €3 that will be spent by this Government in 2005, almost €1 will go in social welfare entitlements."

The increase of €12 per week for all pensioners will benefit those in receipt of Old Age Pension (Contributory and Non-Contributory), Retirement Pension, Widows & Widowers Pension aged over 66, Invalidity Pension aged over 65, Death Benefit aged over 66, Deserted Wife's Benefit/Allowance aged over 66, Carer's Allowance aged over 66, One Parent Family Payment aged over 66.



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The €14 increase in lower rates of payment will benefit people in receipt of Widows & Widowers Pension under 66, Deserted Wife's Benefit aged under 66, Invalidity Pension aged under 65, Death Benefit aged under 66, Disablement Pension, Unemployment Benefit & Assistance, Disability Benefit & Allowance, One Parent Family Payment aged under 66, Blind Pension, Pre-Retirement Allowance, Farm Assist, Carer's Benefit, Carer's Allowance aged under 66, Constant Attendance Allowance, Orphans Pension & Allowance, Supplementary Welfare Allowance.

Increases are also being made in Qualified Adult Allowances (QAA) for the spouses and partners of people receiving weekly social welfare payments. They will increase as follows.

- Increase of €9.30 per week in QAA for Old Age (Contributory) Pension, Retirement Pension and Invalidity Pension where the qualified adult is aged 66 or over.
- Increase of €8 per week in QAA for Old Age (Contributory) Pension and Retirement Pension where the qualified adult is under age 66.
- Increase of €7.90 per week in QAA for all recipients of Old Age (Non-Contributory) Pension.
- Increase of €10 per week in QAA for Invalidity Pension where the qualified adult is under age 66
- Increase of €9.30 per week in QAA for the Blind Pension where the qualified adult is under age 66.
- Increase of €9.30 per week for all other qualified adult payments.

Customers on short-term weekly payments (mainly Unemployment Benefit & Assistance, Farm Assist, Disability Benefit, Carer's Benefit, and Supplementary Welfare Allowance), and those customers paid by electronic methods, will receive their increase in full from their first pay-day in January.

Customers on long-term payments through the book method will receive their increase in mid-February backdated to January. In some cases (such as Disability Allowance and Old Age Pensions) an advance payment to end-March will also be paid to those customers whose books are due for renewal at the beginning of April.

The increases, which will cost €672m in 2005, apply to full rate payments, with proportionate increases for people on reduced rates.



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SEE TABLE OF PAYMENT DATES BELOW:

Dates when weekly Social Welfare Budget Increases will be paid in 2005:

<u>Payment Type</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
<u>Wed</u> Unemployment Assistance Farm Assist Pre-Retirement Allowance	Effective start January
<u>Thurs</u> Unemployment Benefit	Effective start January
<u>Mon</u> Disability Benefit Injury Benefit Maternity Benefit Health and Safety Benefit Disablement Gratuity Supplementary Welfare Allowance	03rd January 2005
<u>Wed</u> Disability Allowance	05th January 2005
<u>Thurs</u> Retirement Pension Invalidity Pension Deserted Wife's Benefit Deserted Wife's Allowance Prisoner's Wife's Allowance One Parent Family Payment (Other than a Widow/er) Carer's Allowance Carer's Benefit Prescribed Relatives Allowance (Where paid separately to Carer) Family Income Supplement	06th January 2005
<u>Fri</u> Disablement Pension Death Benefit Pension (under the OIB scheme) Old Age (Contributory) Pension Widow/er's (Contributory) Pension Orphan's (Contributory) Pension Old Age (Non-Contributory) Pension Blind Person's Pension Widow/er's (Non-Contributory) Pension	7th January 2005



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One-Parent-Family-Payment (in the case of a Widow/er)
Orphan's (Non-Contributory) Pension

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