



**An Roinn Gnóthaí Sóisialacha agus  
Teaghlaigh**

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**Eisiúint Nuachta**

**21st Meán Fómhair 2009**

**Fuel Allowance being paid to customers from this week**

**Over €400million to be spent on fuel support - Hanafin**

The Government is supporting people with fuel bills by providing over €400million this year, said the Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin T.D. Some 334,000 long-term social welfare recipients are this week set to receive additional weekly payments under the Department of Social and Family Affairs Fuel Allowance scheme. Almost €220million is being spent on this scheme alone in the coming months.

Minister Hanafin said **“we recognise the additional pressures there are on people dependent on social welfare payments during the winter months.**

**The Government extended the payment this year by 2 weeks to 32 weeks and also increased the weekly rate by €2 to €20 per week. Customers will see this additional amount in this week’s payment and it will continue until the end of April.”**

The weekly rates payable are €20 (Fuel Allowance) and €23.90 in Smokeless Fuel areas. The additional Smokeless Fuel Allowance is payable only to eligible customers living in designated Smokeless Fuel Areas. The vast majority of people eligible are state pensioners, widows and people with disabilities, who are more vulnerable to the effects of cold weather.

The Fuel Allowance can also be paid alongside the Household Benefits package which provides support for people over 66 years of age and certain other people under that age who are in receipt of a social welfare type payment or fulfil a means test. The Household Benefits package includes the electricity allowance or the gas allowance. The annual value of the schemes is approx €500 per household. Expenditure in 2009 on ESB/gas allowance is expected to be in excess of €200million.

**“This year some 335,000 people will receive the electricity allowance while 38,000 people will opt for the payment towards their gas usage costs. Taken together over €420million is being spent on the Fuel Allowance and the electricity/gas schemes to provide support to some of the most vulnerable over the winter months”** said Minister Hanafin

**ENDS**

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### **Notes for Editors**

#### **Who qualifies for Fuel Allowance:**

#### **You may be entitled to the Fuel Allowance if you are getting one of the following payments from the Department of Social and Family Affairs:**

- State Pension (Contributory) or State Pension (Non -Contributory),
- State Pension (Transition),
- Widow's or Widower's (Contributory) or (Non-Contributory) Pension,
- Incapacity Supplement,
- Blind Pension,
- Invalidity Pension,
- Disability Allowance,
- Deserted Wife's Benefit or Allowance,
- One-Parent Family Payment,
- Guardian's Payment (Contributory),
- Guardian's Payment (Non-Contributory),
- Farm Assist,
- Pre-Retirement Allowance,
- Prisoner's Wife's Allowance,
- Long-term Jobseeker's Allowance

#### **You may be entitled to the Fuel Allowance if you are getting one of the following payments from the Health Service Executive:**

- Disabled Person's Rehabilitation Allowance,
- Infectious Diseases Maintenance Allowance,
- Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance,
- a special Department of Defence Allowance,

or

- you are taking part in an employment or educational scheme and are entitled to keep your secondary benefits,

**and**

- you are normally living in the State,
- you are living alone or only with:
  - a qualified spouse or partner or qualified child(ren)
  - other people getting one of the payments listed above who would also qualify for Fuel Allowance in their own right,
  - a person who gives you full-time care and attention if you are a person with a disability or a long-term illness,
  - a person getting short-term Jobseeker's Allowance,

**and**

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- you and other members of your household are unable to pay for your heating needs from your own resources. **To meet this condition, your household must satisfy a means test.**

### **How to apply**

To apply for Fuel Allowance fill in application form NFS 1 available on [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) This application form is also available from your local post office.

If you apply for the Fuel Allowance after **the start** of the heating season (the last week in September), the allowance will not be backdated.

If you are getting a payment from the Department of Social and Family Affairs or a social security payment from a country covered by EC Regulations or a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement, the Fuel Allowance will be included in your weekly payment.

If you are not getting a social welfare payment, your Fuel Allowance can be paid directly into your account in a financial institution or you can collect the allowance at your local post office using your social services card.

**Full details of the Fuel Allowance scheme available on [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)**