

Questions and Answers on Social Welfare

September 2008

housing and welfare information

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For further information on any of these questions contact Crosscare Housing and Welfare Information.

1. I am not working at the moment and have no income. Can I apply for a Social Welfare payment?

Yes. You can apply for a Jobseekers Payment. If you have recently finished up in employment you may qualify for a Jobseekers Benefit based on PRSI contributions. If you have no, or, insufficient contributions made you may apply for a Jobseekers Allowance. Call to your Local Social Welfare Office for further information. Bring ID, proof of address and your P45 (if you have it). After all required information is produced a Social Welfare Officer will process your claim.

2. I applied for a Social Welfare payment. Can I get a payment whilst waiting?

If you are awaiting a decision or not qualify for a mainstream payment you may qualify for a **Supplementary Welfare Allowance**. Contact the Community Welfare Officer in your local health centre.

3. I am an EU Migrant Worker and lost my job. Can I apply for a Social Welfare payment?

You may qualify for a Jobseekers Payment. If you have worked and made PRSI contributions in Ireland for the required period of time you may qualify for a Jobseekers Benefit (JB). If you worked and made contributions in another EEA country prior to coming to Ireland you may combine contributions in order to qualify for JB. Your 3rd option is to apply for Jobseekers Allowance. You will be required to fulfil a number of conditions.

If you have worked in Ireland for more than three months and paid contributions during that time you may be granted a **Supplementary Welfare Allowance** payment from your Community Welfare Officer. Please contact your local Health Centre.

4. What is the HRC

HRC is Habitual Residence Conditions. Since May 2004 all applicants for certain social welfare payments are required to meet these conditions. There are five factors used to determine a person's habitual residence. All are of equal importance. See www.welfare.ie for further information.

5. I am unfit to work. Can I apply for a Social Welfare payment?

Yes. You may qualify for a payment if you are ill or disabled. There are a range of payments available depending on your circumstances. This includes both benefit payments based on PRSI contribution made while in employment and allowance payments where no or limited PRSI contributions exist. For more information see: www.welfare.ie or contact your Local Social Welfare Office.

6. I have been refused a payment. Can I challenge this decision?

Yes. It is important to ask for any decision in writing and to have the reason for refusal of payment clearly stated. Every person refused a payment has the right to request a review of the decision made, or, alternatively appeal within 21 days. There are services that may assist you in this matter.

7. I am unexpectedly in need for financial assistance. Are there any emergency payments available to me?

Yes. You may qualify for an Exceptional Needs Payment (ENP). Contact the Community Welfare Officer at your local Health centre and explain your situation. This is a discretionary payment.

8. I am on a Social Welfare payment and or in employment on a low income. Can I apply for assistance towards my medical expenses?

Yes. You may qualify for a Medical Card or a GP Visit Card. A Medical Card covers the cost of GP visits, treatment in the Public Hospital System and some Dental treatment. It also covers the cost of prescription medicine.

A GP Visit Card covers the cost of visits to your GP only. The terms under which you may qualify for the GP card are quite broad. For more Information, please see: www.hse.ie .

9. I am expecting a child. What payments are available to me?

You may qualify for a Maternity Benefit payment. This is based on PRSI contributions from insurable employment. If you will be parenting alone you may qualify for a One Parent Family Payment. This is non contribution based. Please see www.welfare.ie or contact your Local Social Welfare Office for further information.

If you are reliant on a Social Welfare or Supplementary Welfare Allowance you may qualify for further support in the form of Exceptional Needs Payments towards additional expenses.

10. I am an EEA Migrant Worker and expecting a child. Is there assistance available for hospital expenses?

Yes. Apply for a Medical Card/ GP visit card.

If you do not qualify you will be registered by the HSE as "Category 2". This entitles you to access a range of medical service at reduced, or, no cost. Category 2 status entitles you to free pre and post natal outpatient and inpatients hospital expenses related to the birth of your child. Go to www.hse.ie for more information

11. I am an EU Migrant Worker. Can I claim Child Benefit for children born outside the Republic of Ireland?

Yes. You can claim Child Benefit when in employment in Ireland. You will also qualify while in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit provided you meet the Habitual Residence Conditions. You will be required to provide the child benefit section with a range of information.

At present there is a backlog with applications for Child Benefit. It is very important that you inform the Child Benefit Section of any changes in your circumstances ie change of address, child turns 16 years, child comes to reside in Ireland etc as this may affect your claim

12. I fell ill and my employer won't pay me. Can I apply for a Social Welfare payment?

Yes. If you are in insurable employment and have the necessary contributions you may qualify for an Illness Benefit payment.

Your Illness will have to be certified by a General Practitioner. Illness Benefit forms are available from your GP. Medical Certificates will have to be submitted to the Illness Benefit section on a weekly basis.

13. I am a parent in employment on a low income. Is there any assistance available to me?

Yes. You may qualify for Family Income Supplement (FIS). This is an income support available to those working on low income.

If you are a single parent you may qualify for some assistance through the One Parent Family Payment scheme. For more information see www.welfare.ie

If you are in private rented accommodation you may also qualify for rent allowance. Contact the Community Welfare Officer at your local Health Centre.

You may also qualify for a medical card. See www.hse.ie for further information.

Contact Details

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