

This document holds information of services available.

Benefits & Entitlements

Chronic Pain, as a disease in its own right, may not, in all instances, be categorized as a disability for the purposes of claiming benefits, so your entitlement to benefits will, to a large degree, depend on how your disabling condition is reported in a medical report and how it is looked upon and interpreted by the relevant decision-makers.

You should take note of the definition of ‘disability’ as per the Disability Act 2005 and it is as follows:

“Disability”, in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment.

Many claims are rejected due to an inadequate medical report. It is insufficient for your GP just to state that you have Chronic Pain/Fibromyalgia and that you should get Disability Allowance, for example.

Your claim is assessed by a medical team working for the Department of Social Welfare and the medical report must contain as much detail as possible.

For example; what type of Chronic Pain does the patient have e.g. FBSS, CRPS, Fibromyalgia, Neuropathic Pain; what impact has the illness had on the ability to work, travel and on relationships; what treatments are recommended and what is the prognosis. The more detail the better the chance of success.

If you are claiming an allowance there are some useful links below.

Remember if your application has been rejected there is an appeals process – but appeals must be sent in within 21 days of your case being denied.

If you have any issues with making an appeal or need some information, you can contact us directly or contact your local citizen’s information centre.

Information

Your local Citizens Information is a good first port of call as they will inform you of the procedures to follow and may even tell you what your entitlements are if any.

Citizens Information Services.

Website: www.citizensinformationboard.ie

Lo-call: 1 890 777 121

Below is a list of benefits you may be entitled to – each link contains all the relevant information in regards to entitlements, rules, and rates.

Carer’s Allowance

http://www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/carers_all.aspx

Carer’s Benefit

http://www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/carers_ben.aspx

Disability Allowance

<http://www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/disall.aspx>

Disablement Benefit

http://www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/oib_disableb.aspx

Illness Benefit

<http://www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/illben.aspx>

Injury Benefit

http://www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/oib_injuryb.aspx

Invalidity Pension

<http://www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/invalidity.aspx>

Respite Care Grant

<http://www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/respitgrant.aspx>

If you require further information – please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Community Welfare Services

Community Welfare Services are provided by Community Welfare Officers (CWOs). This service used to be provided by the HSE, but is now part of the Department of Social Protection. Community Welfare Officers now work for the Department of Social Protection (Social Welfare) but provide clinics from HSE health centres.

There are a number of different services offered – we've listed them below.

*Be Advised – Some assessments may involve home visits to verify a person's place of residence for Rent Supplement purposes or simply to interview someone in surroundings that are more comfortable if he or she has special needs or is unable to visit the local health centre in person.

Supplementary Welfare Allowance

Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance is a weekly allowance paid to people who do not have enough income to meet their needs and those of their families.

If you have no income, you may be entitled to the basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance.

If your weekly income is below the Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate for your family size, a payment may be made to bring your income up to the appropriate Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate. If you have claimed a social welfare benefit or pension but it has not yet been paid and you have no other income, you may qualify for basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance while you are waiting for your payment.

If you have returned to work, you can claim the basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance for up to 30 days while you are waiting for your wages.

You can download the application form [here](#) but you must bring the form, along with the following to your local social welfare office:

- Personal Public Service (PPS) numbers for yourself, your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant and your children
- Proof of residency
- Proof of identity, for example, a Public Services Card (if you have one), a passport, driving license, work permit, immigration (GNIB) card, etc.
- Evidence of any household income
- Birth certificates for any children you include in your application
- Documents to show your income and financial situation, such as payslips, P45, P35, P60, bank statements, etc.

Exceptional Needs Payment

Exceptional Needs Payments are paid under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme.

You do not have to meet the habitual residence condition to qualify.

An Exceptional Needs Payment is a single payment to help meet essential, once-off, exceptional expenditure, which a person could not reasonably be expected to meet out of their weekly income. For example, the payment can be for bedding or cooking utensils for someone setting up a home for the first time, visiting relatives in hospital or prison, funeral costs or for clothing in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances.

Exceptional Needs Payments are not paid for religious ceremonies, such as communions and confirmations.

You may get help with the cost of your electricity or natural gas bill but only in exceptional circumstances. You may be eligible for an Exceptional Needs Payment to help you with the cost of a funeral if your income is low. Each case is decided on its merits by a DSP representative.

To apply for an Exceptional Needs Payment, you must visit your local Community Welfare Officer at your Social Welfare (DSP) office as soon as possible and bring along your PPS number and that of your family and evidence of any payments or income you are currently receiving.

Household Benefits Package

The Household Benefits Package is a package of allowances which help you with the costs of running your household. The package is available to everyone aged over 70 and to people under age 70 in certain circumstances.

Only one person in a household can qualify for the package at any time. You must show that you are the registered consumer at the address for which you are applying for the Household Benefits Package. There are 2 *allowances* in the Household Benefits Package:

Allowance 1

- The Electricity Allowance or

- Natural Gas Allowance or
- Cash Electricity Allowance or
- Cash Gas Allowance

OR

Allowance 2

- The Free Television Licence

Any person over 70 automatically qualifies for the Household Benefits Package. You can also qualify for the Household Benefits Package if you meet one of the following conditions and live alone or only with excepted people:

1. You are between 66 and 70 and are getting:

- State Pension (Contributory)
- State Pension (Non-Contributory)
- Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension
- Deserted Wife's Benefit or Allowance
- An ordinary Garda Widow's Pension from the Department of Justice and Equality or
- An equivalent Social Security Pension/Benefit from a country covered by EU Regulations or from a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement

2. You are under 66 and are getting:

- Disability Allowance
- Invalidity Pension
- Blind Pension
- Incapacity Supplement or Workmen's Compensation with Disablement Pension (for at least 12 months)
- An equivalent Social Security Pension/Benefit from a country covered by EU Regulations, or from a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement

You can download an application form [here](#) and return the completed form to:
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Social Welfare Services
College Road
Sligo
Ireland

Living Alone Increase

The Living Alone Increase is an extra payment for anyone receiving a social welfare payment that lives alone.

The current amount is €9.

You qualify if you are under 66, live alone and are getting Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension, Incapacity Supplement or Blind Pension.

You can download the application form [here](#) – you must send the completed form to the section of the Social Welfare from where you get your main payment.

Fuel Allowance

Fuel Allowance is a payment under the National Fuel Scheme to help with the cost of heating your home during the winter months. It is paid to people who are dependent on long-term social welfare payments and who are unable to provide for their own heating needs.

Only one Fuel Allowance is paid to a household.

The Fuel Allowance is €22.50 per week.

People getting certain social welfare payments can get their total Fuel Allowance of €607.50 paid in 2 lump sums.

More information on the Fuel Allowance including entitlements and where to send your completed forms can be found [here](#)

You can download the application form [here](#) – you must send the completed form to the section of the Social Welfare from where you get your main payment.

MABS

MABS provides a confidential service and will not discuss your situation with anyone without your signed agreement. MABS will give you information and support you in making decisions, but will not tell you what to do about your debts and payments. You are the person who decides.

MABS services are free.

If you are in financial difficulty, contact MABS as soon as possible, they may be able to help.

You can visit their website [here](#)

Or you can call them on 0761 07 2000 (9am – 8pm, Monday to Friday)

National Advocacy Service

The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities provides an independent, confidential and free, representative advocacy service that works exclusively for the person using the service and adheres to the highest professional standards.

NAS works to ensure that when life decisions are made, due consideration is given to the will and preference of people with disabilities and that their rights are safeguarded.

If you feel that you would benefit from using the National Advocacy Service, you can contact them on:
0761 07 3000

Or email: info@advocacy.ie

Health Services

Medical Cards:

Most medical cards are granted on the basis of a means test and/or medical need. Each case is decided on its merits but you may qualify if your income is not much above the guideline figure and your medical costs are exceptionally high. It may be possible for one or more members of a family (who would not otherwise qualify) to get a medical card in their own right if they have high medical expenses or needs.

You can apply for a medical card online [here](#).

Alternatively, you can download [this pdf file](#), print it, fill it out and send it to: Client Registration Unit, PO Box 11745, Dublin 11.

GP Visit Cards:

The purpose of the card is to help people who are not eligible for medical cards with the costs of visiting a doctor. The card covers you for GP visits but nothing else. The income guidelines for the GP visit card are 50% higher than the medical card income guidelines.

The same application form is used for both the Medical card and GP visit card applications. You can apply online by clicking the above links.

Drugs Payment Scheme:

With a Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS) card, an individual or family in Ireland only has to pay a maximum amount monthly for approved prescribed drugs, medicines and certain appliances. As of January 2009, the maximum amount a family must pay is €100. Everyone in Ireland who doesn't have a medical card should apply for the DPS card.

You can apply online by clicking [here](#) or you can download the application form [here](#).
Send completed forms to:

*Drugs Payment Scheme
Client Registration Unit
PO Box 12966
Dublin 11
D11 XKF3*

Hospital Charges:

Every resident in Ireland is entitled to be treated free of charge in a public bed in a public hospital. Some people may have to pay maintenance charges. Out-patient services, when you are referred by your GP, are also provided free of charge.

Tax relief:

You may get tax relief on certain health expenses, which you have incurred and for which you have not been reimbursed. The tax relief is at the standard rate of tax of 20%. So, if you spent €1,000 you would get a refund of €200. This claim should be made on a Med 1 form, available from your local tax office or online at www.revenue.ie.

European Health Insurance Card

The European Health Insurance Card or EHIC (formerly the E111 form) allows the holder to access health care services when traveling to or on holiday in another EU or EEA country. This is especially handy for people with Chronic Illnesses as we never know when we are going to need it. There is no charge for this card.

You can apply online for a European Health Insurance Card [here](#).

E126: Patient/Client Refund of Health Costs under EU Health Regulations

The first principle to bear in mind is that an EHIC entitles the user to public health care in another Member State on the same basis as a resident of that State.

In some States, e.g. France this involves a co-payment and such co-payments are non-refundable.

If a client avails of private health care no refund is payable.

Generally speaking a refund is only due if a client availed of a public health service and was charged for same because they did not present a valid EHIC on the occasion or if they were charged in error by the service provider in the other State.

The E126 form is used between States to establish:

- If the person availed of a public health services
- The level of refund that is due to the client.

On return of a completed E126 form from another State, the local office should be able to determine if a refund is due or not.

If a refund is due the amount determined on the E126 should be processed promptly and paid to the client.

In the event that no refund is due then that decision should be communicated to the client outlining the reasons for refusal.