



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta  
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Department of Employment Affairs  
and Social Protection

# Covid-19: Social Security Supports - Employers & Employees

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# Background



**COVID-19**, also known as coronavirus, is a new virus that is circulating worldwide.

This presentation is intended to update you on forthcoming changes and signpost you to further information on the supports that the D/EASP offer for employers and jobseekers via its network of Intreo Centres.

These include the **following**:

- i.COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Support
- ii.Employer COVID-19 Refund Scheme
- iii.Illness Benefit
- iv.Short-time Work Support (STWS) Scheme
- v.Supplementary Welfare Allowance

# Ways to Access Our Services and Supports



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, you do not need to go to an Intreo Centre to make a claim.

**Instead you can make a claim in the following ways:**

1. An application form for the new Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment can be downloaded from our website [www.gov.ie/jobseekers](http://www.gov.ie/jobseekers) and returned to FREEPOST PO BOX 12896 Dublin 1;
2. You can apply for Jobseekers support through our online portal [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie), (you will need a Public Services Card); **or**
3. Phone us on 1890-800-024 or 01-2481398 and we will send you the relevant application form for the new payment.

# COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Support



If you have lost work due to a **downturn in economic activity caused by COVID-19** you can apply for the new COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment.

This new payment **quickly delivers income support** to the unemployed (be they self-employed or employees) for a **6-week period**.

It is designed to provide income security for a period during which **you can apply for a full Jobseekers payment** (and receive any additional entitlements backdated).

You can apply for the Pandemic Unemployment Payment by filling in the one page application and returning to us by **Freepost**.

# Employer COVID-19 Refund Scheme



Where possible, we are encouraging employers to retain employees, in order to keep them close to the labour market.

To facilitate this the Department is setting up a temporary refund scheme for employers, which will pay them the €203 per week for each worker who would otherwise have been laid off because a business has to cease trading due to HSE advice on ‘social distancing’.

The Office of the Revenue Commissioners has come forward and offered to implement the Refund system on the department’s behalf.

This will mean that workers retain their link with employers and there is no need for them to personally submit a jobseeker's claim.

# Employer COVID-19 Refund Scheme (cont'd.)



The new COVID Employer Refund Scheme has been designed to use existing infrastructure and processes and **can be put in place immediately.**

The Scheme **allows employers to make a payment equivalent to the COVID-19 Unemployment Payment** (of €203) to workers who are temporarily laid off and are receiving no other wages payment from the employer.

When an employer **submit payroll returns to Revenue via their payroll provider**, Revenue will refund the employer the €203.

In order to ensure workers **who have child and adult dependents receive their full entitlements**, these individuals will be asked to apply for Jobseeker's Benefit via the online portal [www.mywelfare.ie](http://www.mywelfare.ie).

A detailed set of FAQ's has already been made available.

# Employer COVID-19 Refund Scheme (cont'd.)



## Eligible Employees:

- i. Have been **temporarily laid off** and therefore are eligible for Covid-19
- ii. Are between 18-66 years old;
- iii. Were **included on a payroll submission** made by the employers from 1st February 2020 to 15th March 2020;
- iv. Have not ceased the employee with Revenue; and
- v. Are **receiving no other wage payment** from their employers.

Anyone who is paid a wage from the business and is on PAYE can be included

# Employer COVID-19 Refund Scheme (cont'd.)



## Eligible Employers:

- i. Are registered on ROS
- ii. Registered for the new Covid Employer Refund scheme
- iii. Are up to date with their payroll returns.



# Illness Benefit



The Government has announced that the rules for **Illness Benefit** and **Supplementary Welfare Allowance** will be changed to help prevent the transmission of coronavirus

The changes mean that if you are diagnosed with COVID-19, or are suspected of having COVID-19 and are medically required to self-isolate, **you can get income support.**

Legislation is required to implement these changes and emergency legislation **is being prepared & will be introduced to Dáil Eireann today.**

Illness Benefit will also be available to **self-employed persons.**

## Illness Benefit (cont'd.)



The proposed changes are:

- i. You will **not** have to wait 6 days before you can apply for Illness Benefit. This means Illness Benefit can cover the first week of a COVID-19 diagnosis (or medically-required self-isolation) and any subsequent weeks.
- ii. The personal rate of Illness Benefit will increase from €203 to €305 per week for up to 2 weeks if you are medically required to self-isolate, or for the duration of your medically-certified absence from work with a COVID-19 diagnosis.
- iii. The new enhanced Illness Benefit rate will be effective from 9 March 2020 and workers will be entitled to a refund of any arrears due from this date when the legislation is in place.
- iv. The normal social insurance requirements for Illness Benefit will be waived if you are medically required to self-isolate or diagnosed with COVID-19.

# What is the STWS?



The **Short-time Work Support (STWS) Scheme** is a package of measures designed to provide stability to both employees and employers during a period of temporary difficulties

## For employees:

- i. Short-time Work Support is an income support payment – a form of Jobseekers Benefit – for employees who have been **temporarily placed on a shorter working week**, due to business challenges affecting their employment.
- ii. The payment is made in respect of the employee's regular salary for the days that they are no longer working.
- iii. For example, where an employee's working week has been reduced from a standard five-day work pattern to a standard three-day work pattern, they can receive STWS for the other two days.

## What is the STWS? (cont'd.)



For employers:

- i. Short-time Work Support is intended to help employers during periods of temporary difficulty, **without resorting to permanent layoffs.**
- ii. It helps employers **retain skilled labour**, in a reduced capacity, avoiding the need to re-employ or retrain employees once the business situation improves.
- iii. **Additional supports** are also provided by the State enterprise agencies (i.e. IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Local Enterprise offices, etc.)

# STWS: Eligibility



## Workplace consultation:

i. In line with accepted industrial relation norms, it is expected that employers will consult with employees and any staff representative bodies regarding plans to introduce reduced working arrangements.

## Who can qualify?

i. Full-time employees who have been placed on a reduced weekly work pattern can apply for the support.

ii. Employees must work 3 days per week or less to qualify, having previously been employed on a full time basis.

# Supplementary Welfare Allowance



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.

The means test for Supplementary Welfare Allowance **will be removed** if you are medically required to self-isolate or are diagnosed with COVID-19.

**Supplementary Welfare Allowance** will also be available to self-employed persons.