



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

# COVID-19 Income Supports

Employer & Employee Guidance

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

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# Overview



## Overview

The Government announced a number of new measures to provide financial support to workers affected by the COVID-19 crisis. As part of these measures, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is administering a number of emergency income support payments. These schemes/payments enable employees, whose employers are affected by the pandemic, to receive significant supports during the period of the pandemic.

This document provides employers and employees with additional information on the operation of these temporary supports. It also presents a number of detailed Q&A and scenarios to assist employees, self-employed and employers at this challenging time.

It should be read in conjunction with the individual scheme information available on our website at [gov.ie/deasp](https://gov.ie/deasp).

This information may be updated, and any updates will be published on our dedicated COVID-19 website at [gov.ie/deaspcovid19](https://gov.ie/deaspcovid19).

In considering how to respond to questions employers and employees are directed in the first instance to the public health advice issued by the HSE, available on their website [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie). It is essential that all individuals and employers abide by this advice.

# COVID-19 Income Supports & Measures

## 1) COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment

A new COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment to quickly deliver income support to employees and the self-employed who have lost work and income because of COVID-19. The payment is easy to apply for, with online applications at [www.mywelfare.ie](http://www.mywelfare.ie) and provides income security for employees and the self-employed during the pandemic. This was increased to €350 per week on March 24th.

## 2) A new Enhanced Illness Benefit Payment for COVID-19 absences

When a worker is told to self-isolate by a doctor or the HSE or has been diagnosed with COVID-19 (Coronavirus) by a doctor, they can apply for an enhanced Illness Benefit payment. The current 6 day 'waiting period' before Illness Benefit begins has also been removed in respect of medically required cases of self-isolation or medically diagnosed cases of COVID-19. This payment was also increased to €350 per week on March 24th.

In addition, the normal **social insurance conditionality** requirements for access to supports include Illness Benefit in cases of COVID-19 illness or medically certified self-isolation have been amended to include self-employed people.

## 3) A Temporary COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme administered by the Revenue Commissioners

The COVID-19 Temporary Wage Subsidy is a scheme administered by the Revenue Commissioners. It allows employers to pay their employees during the current pandemic. Employers will be refunded up to 70 percent of an employee's nett (after tax) wages - up to a level of €410. The employer is expected to make

their best efforts to maintain net income as close to 100% of normal income as possible for the subsidised period. This payment replaces the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection's Employer Refund Scheme announced on 15th March.



# Information for those absent from work due to the health impacts of COVID-19

## Workers Required to Self-Isolate

Where an employee or a self-employed person is medically required to self-isolate in accordance with the up to date guidelines from the HSE they can apply for the Enhanced Illness Benefit payment for COVID-19 absences.

The personal rate of this payment has been increased to €350 per week as compared with the normal personal rate of €203 for Illness Benefit. If the person applying has dependents, they will receive additional supports for them. An increased rate for Qualified Adults of €147 per week applies (normally €134.70).

In the interests of public health, this payment will only be paid where individuals remain confined to their home or a medical facility. The person should request their GP to submit a medical certificate on their behalf and should also complete the IB1 form or apply online at [www.mywelfare.ie](http://www.mywelfare.ie)

A person required to self-isolate will be paid for a maximum period of two weeks self-isolation and must remain confined to their home or a medical facility during the period of self-isolation.

## Workers who are diagnosed with COVID-19

Where an employee or self-employed person is diagnosed with COVID-19 they can also apply for the enhanced Illness Benefit payment.

The personal rate of this payment has been increased to €350 per week as compared with the normal personal rate of €203 for Illness Benefit. If the person applying has dependents, they will receive additional supports for them. An increased rate for Qualified Adults of €147 per week applies (normally €134.70).



In the interests of public health, this payment will only be paid where individuals remain confined to their home or a medical facility. The person should request their GP to submit a medical certificate on their behalf and should also complete the IB1 form or apply online at [www.mywelfare.ie](http://www.mywelfare.ie)

A person diagnosed with COVID-19 will receive the enhanced payment for a maximum period of 10 weeks and must remain confined to their home or a medical facility for at least two weeks and for so long as advised by a medical practitioner.

## Who should apply for Enhanced Illness Benefit for COVID-19

**You should apply if you are ill or required to self-isolate and work in the private sector.** The enhanced arrangements are intended to reduce the financial loss incurred by workers - employed and self-employed people - who are not adequately covered by occupational sick pay arrangements.

**You do not need to apply if you work in the civil and non-commercial public sector:** Separate occupational leave arrangements have already been made to support civil service and public sector workers

## Employees whose employers do not supplement/top-up the State Illness Benefit payment

Some employees, in receipt of the enhanced illness benefit payment may face financial difficulties if their employer cannot pay sick pay beyond the level paid by the State. In such circumstance they can apply for additional emergency income support, in the form of Supplementary Welfare Allowance (based on a means test)

or an urgent or exceptional needs payment.

Applications are usually made in person, normally when a person is no longer confined to their home. People can contact their local Intreo Centre or ring the Department's COVID-19 Income Support Helpline on 1890 800 024 or 01 248 1398 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday, for information and assistance.

## How to apply for Illness Benefit for COVID-19

It is essential that both a medical certificate (completed by your doctor) and application form (completed by you) are both sent to the Department as without both being received, your application cannot be processed and your payment cannot issue to you.

### Step 1

If you are an employee or self-employed and feel you may be suffering from a COVID-19 illness or may need to self-isolate you should contact your GP by telephone. If the GP is satisfied that you have COVID-19 or that, based on public health guidelines, you are a probable source of infection and should self-isolate, they will advise you accordingly.

The GP or doctor will then complete a medical certificate on your behalf and send this directly to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. You will need to provide your GP with your name, PPS number and date of birth so that this certificate can be associated with a payment in your name.

### Step 2

You now need to complete an application form for Illness Benefit (Form IB 1). There are two ways you can make an application.

**Online:** The quickest and easiest way to apply is online by visiting [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie) click on the COVID-19 payments and select COVID-19 Illness benefit. All a customer needs is their email address, PPSN and bank

account details.

**By Post:** Request an Illness Benefit form – email, phone or collection

Please be aware that the quickest way to apply for our COVID-19 payments is online via [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie). It is a simple and easy application process. All a customer needs is their email address, PPSN and bank account details.

To request a form via please email [forms@welfare.ie](mailto:forms@welfare.ie) stating that you require an Illness Benefit form and including your full address. A form will be posted to you. You can also call 1890 800 024 or 01 248 1398 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday to request an application form by post. You can also ask a friend or family member to pick up an application form for you at your local Intreo Centre.

### **Completing the Illness Benefit Form**

Part 5 of the form relates to how you wish to be paid and it is therefore important that you provide us with the relevant details. You do not need to complete Part 7 of this form.

If you have been medically certified to self-isolate or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 do not attend your GP or Intreo Centre.

You should complete the form carefully to ensure a quick and efficient payment. You do not need to stamp the envelope. Send your application form by

Freepost to Social Welfare Services, PO Box 1650, Dublin 1.

### **Step 3**

Once both the application form and the medical certificate are received, your payment will be processed. You should continue to liaise with your doctor in relation to your diagnosis and the length of time you are medically certified unfit to work because of COVID-19.



# Income supports for workers who have lost their income due to COVID-19



# COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment

A new COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment has been introduced for employees and self-employed people who have lost all employment and income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment is paid at a flat rate of €350 per week for up to 12 weeks from March 24th. It was originally set at a rate of €203 from March 13 but it was increased by Government on March 24.

All payments from March 24th onwards will be made at this increased rate.

## How to apply for the emergency Pandemic Unemployment Payment

The application process has been streamlined to quickly get people into payment. You DO NOT NEED to go to the Intreo Centre to apply - you can apply in the following ways:

- You can apply online for the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie) This is by far the quickest and easiest way to apply;
- An application form for the new payment can be downloaded from our website [www.gov.ie/deaspcovid19](http://www.gov.ie/deaspcovid19) and returned to FREEPOST PO BOX, 12896, Dublin 1;
- You can phone us on 1890 800 024 or 01 248 1398 or email us on [forms@welfare.ie](mailto:forms@welfare.ie) and we will send you the relevant application form for the new payment.

Payment is made by electronic transfer to Irish residents only (into an Irish bank account) and only into accounts held in Irish domestic financial institutions. It will

be paid in to your bank account every Tuesday once your application is processed by the previous Thursday. Note: Please keep checking your Bank Account as payment may issue in advance of us formally notifying you.

People who do not have an Irish bank account can apply for the standard jobseeker's payment and opt for payment at a post office.

## **Support for workers who have been put on short time working due to COVID-19**

Employees who are put on short-time working by their employer due to a reduction in business activity related to COVID-19 may apply for a [Short-time Work Support](#) payment.

Short Time Work Support is an income support payment for people temporarily placed on a shorter working week.

The payment is made instead of a person's regular salary for the days that they are no longer working. For example, if a person's working week has been reduced from a 5 day work pattern to a 3 day work pattern, then they can receive support for the other 2 days. The rate of payment for the two days, in this case, is €81.20

# Support for employers and businesses affected by COVID-19 but who wish to retain workers on their payroll

Employers are encouraged to retain employees on their payroll where possible, as part of the Government measures a scheme has been established to help employers continue to pay staff who would otherwise have been laid off because of trading difficulties created by the pandemic. This means that workers retain their link with employers and there is no need for them personally to submit a jobseeker's claim.

The scheme known as the Temporary COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme for employers is administered by the Revenue Commissioners.

Employers who have already signed up for the refund scheme announced on 15th March, and who may have received refunds under the current scheme do not need to reapply.

Eligible employers will be supported by up to 70% of an employee's take home income, up to a maximum weekly tax-free payment of €410. (i.e. 70% of take home weekly income of €38,000 per annum). The scheme will provide subsidies on incomes up to €76,000 or twice average earnings. It will be capped at net €350 for incomes between €38,000 and €76,000.

Further information on the scheme is available at the website of the [Revenue Commissioners](#).

## **Workers who are requested to stay at home by their employer**

Employers are requested to follow public health advice at all times.

Where employers have requested their staff to stay at home and they have faced trading difficulties as a result of the pandemic they ideally should in these cases use the Revenue Commissioner's Temporary Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme to retain their employees on their payroll.

In circumstances where the employer is unable to keep paying their employees and they temporarily lay them off then the employees should apply for the Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment.

Where the employer asks the employee to work from home and they are still paying them then there is no recourse to a social welfare income support in these circumstances.

If the employer has asked the employee to work from home on a reducing working week then the employee may be eligible for the Shorter Working Scheme. Details of this scheme are available on the Department's website at [www.gov.ie/Deaspcovid19](http://www.gov.ie/Deaspcovid19)

## **Workers who need to care for another person During COVID-19**

Many employers can, and do, agree compassionate leave arrangements with staff who need to take short periods of time off to care for another person. These include arrangements to enable employees to work remotely from home, to alter shift patterns, to work-up time taken, to rearrange parental leave or to bring forward annual leave entitlements from future work periods. Depending on their specific circumstances some of these individuals may be able to avail of the Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment. Where it is not possible to make appropriate



compassionate leave arrangements, employees can call on some statutory entitlements.

## Force Majeure Leave

An employee is entitled to paid leave, known as '**force majeure leave**', where they are urgently required to attend to the needs of a person who is affected by an illness or injury, including an actual or probable case of COVID-19. The person to whom care is being provided must be an immediate family relative or a person who is in a relationship of domestic dependency with the employee.

For the purposes of force majeure leave an immediate family relative means a child, a spouse, brother, sister, parent or grandparent. Force Majeure leave is normally limited to a total of 3 days in a 12 month period or 5 days in a 36 month period. However, it is expected that most employers will, on compassionate grounds, enable workers take the full five-day allowance during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Parental Leave

Parents are entitled, with 6 weeks' notice, to take up to 22 weeks unpaid **parental leave** to care for each child up to 12 years of age (16 years of age in the case of a child with a disability).

Parents are also entitled, with 6 weeks' notice, to take **parents leave** of 2 weeks for each child under 1 year of age born on or after 1 November 2019. Parents taking parents leave are eligible to apply for Parent's Benefit from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Applications can be made online at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie) or by post.

Employers are free to waive notice periods for parental/parents leave or to agree to provide paid leave as an alternative to parental/parents leave. Employers can also agree alternative leave/absence arrangements.

## Carers Leave

Every worker is entitled to unpaid leave to temporarily to provide full-time care for someone in need of full-time care and attention. Workers are entitled to take carer's leave of at least 13 weeks up to a maximum of 104 weeks.

Carer's leave from employment is unpaid but the Carer's Leave Act ensures that people who want to take carer's leave will have their jobs kept open for them while they are on carer's leave. People taking Carers leave may be eligible for Carer's Benefit which is paid at a rate of €220 per week if they have enough PRSI contributions or for Carer's Allowance on a means-tested basis.



# Frequently Asked Questions



# Frequently asked questions on the Pandemic Unemployment Payment/Illness Payments

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## What is the best way to apply for a COVID-19 unemployment or illness payment?

The best and easiest way to apply is online via [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie)

## How do I know if I am eligible for the COVID-19 unemployment payment?

### *You are eligible to apply for the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment if...*

You were in employment or self-employment immediately before Friday 13 March, **and**

You have been temporarily laid-off from work or asked to stay at home from work, **and**

Your employer is not in a position to retain you on their payroll, **and**

You are not in receipt of any employment income, **and**

You are resident in Ireland **and**

You are aged between 18-66.

### *You are not eligible to apply for the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment if...*

You were not in employment immediately before Friday 13 March, **or**

You were not laid-off from work by your employer, **or**

You are continuing to receive income from your employment, **or**

You voluntarily left your employment, **or,**

You are not resident in Ireland

## What do I do if I have already claimed the payment but am not eligible?

Most people who are not eligible will not receive any payment. However some people may have inadvertently submitted incorrect information indicating that they are eligible.

In this case you should, in order to avoid an overpayment (which will be pursued by the Department) immediately close your claim by using the close my claim facility at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie)

## **I made a claim for the COVID-19 payment but have received nothing. What should I do?**

If you applied for a COVID-19 unemployment payment before a Thursday have not received payment on Tuesday of the following week then your application has been rejected. Applications can be rejected for two reasons:

First, you may not be eligible or,

Second, some of the information associated with your application may be incorrect.

In order to check if you're eligible consider the following.

- Are you between 18 and 66 years of age?
- Were you in employment or self-employment immediately before the 13th of March 2020?
- Were you laid off by your employer, as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic or did your own business have to cease trading because of the pandemic?
- Can you confirm that you were not in receipt of any employment income as of the date you applied for the COVID-19 payment?
- Have you asked for payment to be made to an Irish bank account or a domestic Irish financial institution?
- Are you resident in Ireland?

If you satisfy these conditions, and only if you satisfy these conditions, you are eligible for the COVID-19 payment. If you do not satisfy these conditions because,

for example, you were already unemployed prior to the 13 March, or because you quit your employment voluntarily you are not eligible and will not have been paid.

If you do satisfy these conditions and haven't received your payment, then it's most likely because some of the information associated with your application is incorrect.

More than likely either the personal public service number (PPSN) or bank IBAN code may have been entered incorrectly.

**The best thing to do if you believe that you are eligible but that your application information may be incorrect is to go to [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie) and resubmit your information by applying again.**

If you are eligible, payment will be made as soon as possible. (For applications received before Thursday one week payment will be made on Tuesday the following week).

The initial payment will be for €350, any arrears due will be calculated and paid at a future date.

People who are not eligible for the COVID-19 payment may be eligible for another payment including a standard Jobseeker payment, a COVID-19 illness payment or a Carers payment. Information on these payments is available at [gov.ie/deaspcovid19](http://gov.ie/deaspcovid19)

## **I am an Irish resident worker but I use an overseas or international bank account. How can I get a payment?**

The restriction on use of non-Irish bank accounts is to help minimise incorrect claiming by people not resident in the country. People who are resident in the country but who do not have an Irish bank account can receive their payment into a domestic financial institution such as a Credit Union.



Where an individual does not have an account with an Irish domestic financial institution they can claim the jobseeker's payment at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie), which is paid at the standard weekly jobseeker's rate and is paid into a local Post Office.

## **I am a worker who has been asked by my employer to stay at home, but she/he is still paying me some or all of my wages. What should I do?**

If you are still being paid by your employer then, in most cases, you don't have to do anything.

The State is paying employers an after-tax subsidy of up to 70% of normal salary to keep workers on their payroll, even in situations where they have to cease trading. With this subsidy your employer should be able to pay you at least 70% of your normal take-home salary up to €38,000, at this level the State subsidy will be €410. The State subsidy is capped at €350 for salaries between €38,000 and €76,000.

If you have a number of adult or child dependents and your weekly wage has been reduced it may, in limited circumstances, be more beneficial for you to claim a payment directly from the State – see further below.

## **I am a worker who has been asked by my employer to stay at home but she/he cannot pay me anything. What can I claim?**

You should claim the emergency COVID-19 payment from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection at [www.mywelfare.ie](http://www.mywelfare.ie). You will receive a

payment of €350 per week.

This is equal to the standard jobseeker rate for a two adult household. The standard weekly jobseeker's payment may be higher than the emergency payment in certain circumstances.

The Jobseeker's payment will only be higher if you have at least one adult and one child dependent, or, at least four child dependents. To claim the higher payment you should complete the Jobseeker's Benefit claim form on [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie) . It may take some time to process this additional payment but you will, in the meantime, receive a minimum of €350 and any additional payment will be backdated when it is calculated.

## **I am a self-employed worker whose trade has ceased or fallen away. What supports are available?**

If you pay yourself as a PAYE worker through your payroll then you can apply for the Temporary Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme from the Revenue Commissioners.

If you don't pay yourself as a PAYE worker, then subject to your trade ceasing temporarily and you are now fully unemployed you should claim the emergency COVID-19 payment at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie). You will receive a payment of €350 per week. This is equal to the standard jobseeker rate for a two adult household.

This payment can increase if you have a number of child dependents (see above). To claim the higher payment you should complete the Jobseeker's Benefit for the Self Employed claim form on [www.mywelfare.ie](http://www.mywelfare.ie). It may take some time to process this additional payment but you will in the meantime receive a minimum of €350 and any additional payment will be backdated when it is paid.

## **I claimed a COVID-19 jobseeker payment but now my employer is paying me what should I do?**

The Department is reconciling its payment files with those of the Revenue Commissioners. Claims from people who are also being paid by their employer will be stopped automatically. In order to avoid any confusion, you should close your claim immediately at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie).

## **I am a worker who was also in receipt of a social welfare payment while at work. What is my position?**

Some social welfare customers can work as well as receive a social welfare payment – for example carers, people with disabilities, lone parents and people in receipt of the Working Family Payment.

If you fall into this category and you were working but have been laid-off temporarily without pay since 13 March, you should claim the emergency COVID-19 payment. This will help substitute your employment income.

Your underlying social welfare payment will be adjusted to take account of the difference between the COVID-19 payment and your normal employment income. This may take some time – any overpayments or arrears will be adjusted in future payments. Arrears will be paid as soon as possible. Overpayments will be deducted on a phased basis from future social welfare payments.

## **I am a worker who works on one side of the border with Northern Ireland but lives on the other. What are my rights?**

Under EU social security regulations payments to 'frontier' workers are made by the social administration of the State where the person resides rather than the State where they work.

Accordingly, people who live in, say, Donegal but work in Derry are entitled to the COVID-19 payments from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection while people who work in Donegal but live in Derry are not entitled to these payments but can claim from the UK benefits system.

However employers in Ireland can claim the temporary wage subsidy for all of their workers, who pay Irish PAYE and Social Insurance, from the Revenue Commissioners. In this way workers who work in say, Donegal, but live in Derry, can, with the co-operation of their employers, receive an income support.

## **I am a worker aged over 66 who has lost my employment income am I entitled to a payment?**

People aged over 66, who are in receipt of a State Pension, who are employees and have lost employment, are eligible to be included in the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme. The Temporary COVID-19 Wage Subsidy is a scheme which allows employers to pay their employees during the current pandemic. Employers will be refunded up to 70 percent of an employee's wages - up to a level of €410. Employers can apply for this scheme through the Revenue Commissioners. We encourage employers to use this Scheme where possible, to maintain employment links between businesses and their employees.

Employers in Ireland can claim the temporary wage subsidy for all of their

workers, who pay Irish PAYE income tax, from the Revenue Commissioners. In this way workers who are aged over 66 can continue, with the co-operation of their employers, to receive employment income of at least 70% of their normal wage.

People aged 66 or over do not pay social insurance contributions and can, if in receipt of the State Contributory Pension retain all of their State pension as well as their employment income and retain that pension payment if they lose employment income.

People in receipt of the non-contributory or means tested pension who are also in receipt of an employment income can have their pension payment increased if they lose that employment income or if that employment income is reduced.

People in receipt of state pension payments also have automatic access to a range of other income supports not available to unemployed people – including the free fuel allowance, the living alone allowance, the household benefits package (gas./electricity), the telephone support allowance, free travel and the free TV licence.

The Pandemic Unemployment Payment is an enhanced payment for jobseekers and eligibility is aligned to jobseeker payments. It is paid to people who, in most cases, have no other source of income.

## **I am in employment and am concerned I might catch the virus from colleagues. Can I leave work and claim the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment?**

No - The COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment is only available to employees who have become fully unemployed due to the downturn in economic activity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and where they are not being paid by their employer.

## **Part-time/casual jobseekers who lose their employment – do they qualify for the €350 Pandemic Unemployment Payment?**

The new emergency COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment is payable to people aged between 18 and 66, who are resident in Ireland, have become fully unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and are not being paid by their employer.

There is no restriction on the number of hours the person has to have been working. The only requirement is that they have become fully unemployed since 13th March, 2020. Consequently anyone who was working part-time and claiming a jobseeker payment either casually or systematic short-time (Short Time Work Support) are entitled to this payment provided they have now become fully unemployed.

## **How will employees' PRSI contributions be affected if employer avails of the temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme or a worker claims the COVID-19 emergency payment?**

It is intended that all people claiming a COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment or in respect of whom a temporary wage subsidy is being claimed will be allocated social insurance contributions appropriate to their normal employment status. No person will lose out on entitlements due to a temporary loss of employment due to COVID-19.

## **How does the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment/COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme impact Maternity/Paternity/Adoptive leave?**

People in receipt of the COVID-19 payment or in receipt of a subsidized wage via the temporary wage subsidy scheme administered by the Revenue Commissioner will be treated for Maternity Benefit, Paternity Benefit, and other social insurance schemes as if they were continuing to make insurance contributions based on their normal social insurance class (Class A, Class S etc.).

Therefore payment of PUP will have no implications for future entitlement to social insurance benefits.

People who are pregnant but whose first day of maternity/paternity/adoptive leave is scheduled to occur during the period they are in receipt of the PUP payment should close their PUP claim and move onto Maternity Benefit as normal.

People already on maternity/paternity/adoptive leave should remain on that leave until such time as they were due to return to work. If that occurs during the COVID-19 pandemic and their place of employment is closed, they should claim the PUP payment at that stage.

People whose period of maternity/paternity/adoptive leave commences after a return to work will be able to claim maternity/paternity/adoptive in the normal way.

Payment frequency is being changed. – From now on payments will be made every two weeks. This is to reduce the requirement for people to leave their home and queue in Post office or banks to withdraw money.

## **I am a person who is required to ‘cocoon’. How can I collect my social welfare payment?**

Social welfare payments, other than the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment, are now being paid on a two weekly basis reducing the need to visit post offices.

Arrangements have been made with An Post to allow a person to assign a temporary agent (typically a close friend or family member) to collect payments on behalf of people who need to cocoon or self-isolate. Forms for nomination of an agent can be collected at a Post Office.

People can also use the “change my payment method” facility on [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie) if they have a verified MyGovID account, to change from payment into a post office to payment into a bank or credit union account. The Post Office also offers bank account facilities.

Finally, in these exceptional circumstances, arrangements have been made with An Post to hold payments for collection for up to 90 days. This may suit some people who would prefer to collect payments in person at a post office rather than use an alternative payment method.

## **I am a worker who needs to self-isolate or who is ill with COVID-19. What should I do?**

If your employer continues to pay you, you don’t need to do anything. If your employer does not pay you should claim the Covid-19 Illness Benefit payment. – This requires a certificate from your GP. You should contact your GP by telephone and your GP can submit this certificate online.



You will also need to submit a claim form. This can now be applied for online at [www.MyWelfare.ie](http://www.MyWelfare.ie), the quickest and easiest way to apply.

## **I am not an employee or self-employed worker but I do receive a social welfare payment. What should I do?**

There is no need to do anything. You should not claim any COVID-19 payment. All existing social welfare payments continue and will be paid via your bank account or through the post office.

## **What happens when I finish my period of self-isolation or when my illness clears up?**

There is no need to do anything.

If you are ill with COVID-19 the period of payment will last for so long as your GP certifies that you need to stay away from work and will cease automatically at the end of that period. If you are still ill at that time then contact your GP again and she/he may re-certify your illness.

If you are self-isolating the payment will cease automatically after two weeks.

If you need to self-isolate for a second time, please contact your GP and submit a new claim.

## Future Updates

We are aware that this is a concerning time for many and we will continue to provide relevant updates via our dedicated COVID-19 page and on our social media channels:

Twitter [@welfare\\_ie](#)

Instagram [@social.protection](#)

If any of your stakeholders have questions we would, in the first instance, direct them to our website for the quickest way to find information on these measures. We also have a COVID-19 Income Support Helpline to and our information team can advise on the most suitable income supports for the caller's circumstances and provide information on how to make an application.

Phone: 01 2481398 / 1890 800 024, Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm