

6. Community Welfare

The Health Service Executive (HSE) is responsible for administering a range of payments alongside social welfare. The Community Welfare Service within the HSE administers the Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) scheme on behalf of the Department of Social and Family Affairs. SWA payments are not normally available if you or your spouse/partner work 30 hours or more a week, if you are in full-time education or if you are under 18 years of age. It is means-tested, meaning your finances and those of your spouse/partner will have to be assessed before it is paid to you. You need to be habitually resident to qualify for most payments. There may be other conditions not mentioned here that will have to be met for you to claim any of these payments but that cannot be covered within the scope of this guide. For example, recent changes allow EU workers to access some payments if they have not been habitually resident in Ireland but they have some work history here. For further information that relates directly to your personal circumstances, you should contact your local health centre, the location of which can be found on the HSE website at www.hse.ie or at your local CIC. Applications are usually made in person to the Community Welfare Officer who decides in the first instance if the payment will be made. There is an appeal system if you disagree with their decision. The types of payments available can be broken down under five main headings:

1. Basic Payments

This is a payment made to those who have no income or an income below the amount set annually by the government. The amount paid depends on the size of your family and your circumstances. It is often made when other income is pending, such as while waiting for social welfare payments to come through or when starting a new job and waiting for the first salary payment.

2. Supplementary Welfare Supplements

These are a group of additional payments to your income to meet the cost of ongoing need, which you may qualify for depending on your circumstances. They include:

- **Rent Supplement** – in general you need to be receiving a Social Welfare or similar payment or on a government-approved scheme, be in need of housing and unable to afford the cost from your normal income, be a legal tenant and an applicant for council housing.
- **Mortgage Interest Supplement** – If your financial circumstances have changed since you took out your mortgage and you receive a Social Welfare payment you may be entitled to help towards the interest part of your repayments.
- **Diet Supplement** – Helps to pay for one of the four specific listed special diets that either you or one or more

of your dependents need because of a verified medical condition that requires special food.

- **Heating Supplement** – This is for those who have ill health, are infirm and require extra heating for their homes, and satisfy the normal SWA conditions.
- **Other Supplements** – Help to cover a necessary expense over a period of time, such as travel costs for hospital visits where people have ongoing need and satisfy the normal SWA conditions.

3. Exceptional Needs Payments

These payments cover unforeseen or once-off expenses or occasions that may cause you financial hardship. You must be unable to meet the need from your own income and have no other source of assistance available and satisfy the normal SWA conditions. For example, funeral expenses, or essential furniture and household equipment costs. Each application is considered on an individual basis, taking into account the type of need, the availability of alternative help and the income of your household.

4. Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Allowance

Payable between June and the end of September, this payment is designed to help with the cost of providing school uniforms and footwear for children in full-time education between the ages of 2 and 22 years.

5. Urgent Needs Payments

People who would not normally qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance may have an urgent need (such as after a flood or a fire) and they may then qualify for an Urgent Needs Payment.

Health Service Executive Payments

There are a range of other payments available from HSE to assist people with illness or disability. They are made in addition to social welfare payments and are meant to enhance the quality of life of a person, e.g. Blind Welfare Allowance, Domicillary Care Allowance, Respite Care Grant, Mobility Allowance, Motorised Transport Grant and Infectious Diseases Maintenance Allowance. For more information on these contact your HSE or local CIC.

- **Blind Welfare Allowance** – This is extra to Social Welfare payments where the person is unable to work or attend to their normal daily duties due to their disability.
- **Domicillary Care Allowance** – This payment is for the parent or carer of a child from birth to 16 years of age whose mental or physical disability is so severe that he/she requires constant care and supervision. The care should be greater than that normally needed by a child of the same age.
- **Respite Care Grant** – This is an additional payment made to the parent or carer of children who is in receipt of Domicillary Care Allowance in order to provide respite/ a break/ a holiday for the family.

- **Mobility Allowance** – This is a payment for a severely disabled person to enable him/her to have a temporary change in surroundings that would be beneficial.

Community Care Services

There are a range of services that are delivered by your local community care centre. These include:

Adult and Child Psychiatry
 Adult Counselling
 Audiology
 Child Care and Family Support Services
 Child Health
 Civil Registration
 Community Welfare
 Dental and Orthodontic
 European Health Insurance Card
 Food Safety and Environmental Health
 Health Promotion
 Immunisation and Vaccination
 Ophthalmology
 Palliative Care
 Psychology
 Regional Service for Sexually Transmitted Infections
 Social Inclusion
 Women's Health

The new Bereavement Counselling Service within the HSE is available only to those who have been bereaved as a result of traumatic deaths such as suicide, homicide, accidents at work, home or on the farm and road traffic accidents. This service is accessed through a General Medical Practitioner (Doctor). All GPs have been notified of this service. The regional contact telephone number

for the voluntary Community Suicide Bereavement support groups - Talk It Over - is 1850 201 249.

Further Information

HSE

www.hse.ie

North Tipperary

Covered by HSE West
 31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick
 Tel. 061 483286/7
www.mwhb.ie

Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford

Covered by HSE South
 Lacken Dublin Road, Kilkenny
 Tel. 056 778 4100

HSE Community Care Head Quarters Carlow/Kilkenny Community Care Head Quarters

Carlow Office Athy Road, Carlow.
 Tel: 059 9130053

Kilkenny Office James Green, Kilkenny.
 Tel: 056 7784600

Sth. Tipperary Community Care Head Quarters

Western Road, Clonmel,
 Co. Tipperary.
 Tel: 052 77000

Waterford Community Care Area

Cork Road, Waterford.
 Tel: 051 – 842800

Wexford Community Care Area

Grogans Road, Wexford.
 Tel: 053 – 9123522