

Checklist for pensioners

This booklet outlines a number of benefits for which you may qualify as a pensioner. You can use this booklet to check if you may qualify for:

Free Travel

Companion Free Travel

National Fuel Scheme

Household Benefits Package (Electricity, Natural Gas Allowance, Group Account Allowance, Bottled Gas Refill Allowance, Free TV Licence and Telephone Allowance)

Carer's Allowance or Benefit

Treatment Benefit

Living Alone Increase

Supplementary Welfare Allowance.

Note

If you are aged 70 or over, you may get the Household Benefits Package regardless of your income or who lives with you.

You may get it if you are under 70 if you meet certain conditions.

For more details, see information booklet SW 107.

Qualifying conditions for our schemes change from time to time. Always check with your local Social Welfare Office or with Information Services to see if qualifying conditions have changed (see page 14 for contact details).

The information in this booklet is correct at the time of going to print.

Free Travel

You can use your Free Travel Pass on:

- Dublin Bus (except Nitelink and special airport services),
- Bus Éireann,
- Iarnród Éireann (including DART, outer suburban and Intercity services),
- LUAS,
- certain private bus and ferry services, and
- certain cross-border services to and from Northern Ireland.

Your spouse or partner does not have to pay when travelling with you within the Republic of Ireland or on cross-border journeys.

If you are aged 66 or over, you can travel free on transport services within Northern Ireland, using a Senior Smartpass card. You should fill in an FTNI1 form to get a Smartpass card.

If you permanently live on any of the Aran Islands, you may get a **limited** number of return flights to Aerfort Chonamara. If you permanently live on Tory Island, you may get a limited number of return flights to Falcarragh.

Note

You can get a Free Travel Pass if you are aged 66 or over and you permanently live in the State.

Companion Free Travel

If you are medically unfit to travel alone, you may qualify for a Companion Free Travel Pass. This allows you to have any **one** person aged 16 or over join you free of charge when travelling.

For more details on free travel, see information booklet SW 40.

Household Benefits Package

The Electricity, Natural Gas Allowance, Group Account Allowance, Bottled Gas Refill Allowance, Telephone Allowance and Free Television Licence are grouped together as a Household Benefits Package with a single application form and one set of qualifying conditions.

Note

Getting one of these payments won't stop you getting Fuel Allowance if you are entitled to it.

Electricity Allowance

This allowance covers:

- normal standing charges,
- **and**
- up to 2,400 units of electricity each year. This is equal to 400 units of electricity in each two-monthly billing period throughout the year.

Once we approve your application, your next ESB bill or the one after will include the allowance and any backdated credit you are owed.

If you have a Nightsaver meter in your home, your unused free electricity units will reduce the cost of electricity in your Nightsaver account.

Note that the allowance does **not** cover the cost of installing an electricity supply in your home.

For more details, see information booklet SW 107.

Natural Gas Allowance

If your home is connected to a natural gas supply, you can get this allowance instead of Electricity Allowance.

The allowance is applied to your natural gas account from the start of the two-monthly billing period that begins after we approve your application.

The allowance covers the standing charge and

- kilo watt hours up to €48.50 in the summer billing periods,
or
- kilo watt hours up to €106.50 in the winter billing periods.

The total value of the allowance is €465 a year.

For more details, see information booklet SW 107.

Group Account Allowance

You may qualify for a Group Account Allowance if you live in self-contained accommodation (a flat or an apartment) and have a slot meter or if the registered consumer of gas or electricity at your address is a landlord.

How the Group Account Allowance works

The allowance is paid monthly to your account in a financial institution or, if you have a social services card, at your post office.

For more details, see information booklet SW 107.

Bottled Gas Refill Allowance

You may qualify for Bottled Gas Refill Allowance if you would normally qualify for Electricity or Natural Gas Allowance, but:

- your house is not connected to an electricity supply,
- or
- you use natural gas from a source other than the national natural gas network.

How the Bottled Gas Refill Allowance works

The allowance is paid monthly to your account in a financial institution or, if you have a social services card, at your post office.

The allowance does **not** cover the cost of buying or hiring empty cylinders or delivering cylinders of gas.

For more details, see information booklet SW 107.

Free Television Licence

If you get the Household Benefits Package, you will qualify for a free television licence from the next renewal date of your current paid television licence.

For more details, see information booklet SW 107.

Telephone Allowance

The Telephone Allowance is a contribution towards your telephone bill.

You may qualify for a Telephone Allowance for a **landline** phone or a **mobile** phone.

If you choose a **landline** phone, the allowance will be paid as a credit on your telephone bill.

If you choose a **mobile** phone, the allowance is paid monthly to your account in a financial institution or, if you have a social services card, at your post office.

The value of the allowance is €25.90 each month.

The allowance does **not** cover the cost of installing a phone or buying a mobile phone.

Note

You may qualify for the Telephone Allowance if you are aged 70 or over and live in a nursing home.

For more details, see information booklet SW 107.

National Fuel Scheme

Fuel Allowance

A Fuel Allowance (currently €18.00 a week) is paid from September to April. Only **one** allowance is paid to any one household. To qualify for Fuel Allowance, you must live alone or with other qualified people and your household must satisfy a means test.

Note

You can get an allowance under the Household Benefits Package and get Fuel Allowance at the same time.

Smokeless Fuel Allowance

This allowance (currently €3.90 a week) helps pay for smokeless fuels in certain areas* where selling bituminous fuel is banned.

* Arklow, Bray, Celbridge, Cork City, Drogheda, Dublin City, Dundalk, Galway City, Kilkenny City, Leixlip, Limerick City, Naas, Sligo, Tralee, Waterford City and Wexford

For more details on how to qualify for Fuel Allowance and Smokeless Fuel Allowance, see information booklets SW 17 and SW 17a.

Carer's Allowance or Benefit

If you have somebody caring for you, they may qualify for a Carer's Allowance or Carer's Benefit. You must need full-time care and frequent help with your daily personal needs, such as walking and getting about, dressing or eating and drinking.

Carer's Allowance is a means-tested payment, but Carer's Benefit is based on your carer's record of PRSI contributions.

If your carer qualifies for Carer's Allowance, they will also get Electricity or Natural Gas Allowance, Telephone Allowance, a TV licence and free travel for themselves.

Carers who look after more than one person full-time may get an extra 50% of the maximum rate of Carer's Allowance or Carer's Benefit each week.

Since September 2007, carers may get half the personal rate of Carer's Allowance with certain other social welfare payments. They may also get half the personal rate of Carer's Allowance even if their spouse or partner is claiming an Increase for a Qualified Adult for them on their social welfare payment.

For more details on Carer's Allowance, see information booklet SW 41.

For Carer's Benefit, see information booklet SW 49.

Treatment Benefit

Dental and optical benefits, contact lenses and hearing aids

These benefits are based on your PRSI record. If you qualify for these benefits at age 60, you will remain qualified for life.

Your spouse may also qualify for these benefits based on your PRSI record if:

- their weekly income is below a certain limit (currently €76.18 a week),
or
- they are earning more than €76.18 a week and were dependent on you immediately before they started or returned to insurable employment,
or
- they are not getting a social welfare payment in their own right (**besides** Carer's Benefit, Disablement Pension, Supplementary Welfare Allowance or Child Benefit),
or
- they are getting Carer's Allowance or State Pension (Non-Contributory) in their own right and were dependent on you immediately before getting this Allowance or Pension.

Note for widows and widowers

If your spouse had a right to Treatment Benefit at the date of their death and you were dependent on them at the time, you will continue to qualify for Treatment Benefit until you remarry.

For more details on Treatment Benefit, see information booklet SW 24.

Living Alone Increase

This increase is an extra weekly payment that you can get if you live entirely or mainly alone and are aged 66 or over.

If you are under age 66, you may get it if you live entirely or mainly alone and are getting Invalidity Pension, Disability Allowance, Unemployability Supplement or Blind Pension.

If you apply for a social welfare pension and write on the form that you live entirely or mainly alone, you will automatically receive this increase when you start getting your pension.

If you are already getting a pension from us and wish to claim the Living Alone Increase, you should apply by filling in application form LA 1.

For more details, see information booklet SW 36.

Supplementary Welfare Allowance

Supplementary Welfare Allowance provides a basic weekly allowance to certain people who have little or no income. If you have no income or are waiting for a social welfare or Health Service Executive payment, contact the Community Welfare Officer at your local office of the Health Service Executive.

In addition to the basic allowance, you may get assistance in the form of:

- supplements for rent, mortgage interest or special dietary or heating needs,
 - exceptional needs payments, which you may get for once-off exceptional costs that you could not reasonably be expected to meet from your normal weekly income,
- and**
- urgent needs payments for a crisis situation, such as a house fire or flood.

For more details, see information booklet SW 54 or contact the Community Welfare Officer at your local office of the Health Service Executive.

Where can I get more information?

You can get information on social welfare services, or get information booklets and application forms:

- on the Internet at www.welfare.ie,
or
- from your local Social Welfare Office (see State Directory section of your phone book or the Golden Pages for contact numbers),
or
- by telephoning the Department's LoCall Leaflet Request Line at **1890 20 23 25** (from the Republic of Ireland only),
or
- by telephoning Information Services at LoCall **1890 66 22 44** (from the Republic of Ireland only) or **+ 353 71 91 93313** (from Northern Ireland or overseas).

Note

The rates charged for using 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary among different service providers.

Citizens Information

The Citizens Information Board is the statutory body which supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on the broad range of social and civil services to the public. It provides the Citizens Information website and supports the voluntary network of Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service.

www.citizensinformation.ie

Lo-Call 1890 777 121 (Mon-Fri 9am-9pm)

Local Centres (see Golden Pages)

Citizen Information is available from over 250 locations nationwide. The contact details and opening hours of your nearest Citizens Information Centre are listed in the Golden Pages.