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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 13 for contact details).

The information in this booklet is correct at the time of going to print. This booklet is intended as a guide only, and is not a legal interpretation.

1. What is the Free Travel Scheme?

If you are aged **66 or over** and you permanently live in the state, the Free Travel Scheme allows you to travel for free on most CIE public transport services and the public transport services offered by a large number of private operators in various parts of the country.

Certain people with an incapacity **under age 66** and who permanently live in the state may also qualify for Free Travel.

CIE services are provided by Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann and Dublin Bus. You can get a list of the private operators who take part in the Free Travel Scheme from the Free Travel Section. See page 6 for contact details.

You can travel for free on journeys entirely within the State and on cross-border journeys between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. See page 18 for details.

If you are aged **66 or over**, you can travel for free on journeys within Northern Ireland. See page 19 for details.

2. How do I qualify for free travel?

To qualify for free travel with a Free Travel Pass, you must be living permanently in the State and be aged 66 or over.

If you are **under age 66** and permanently living in the State, you will qualify for a Free Travel Pass if **one** of the statements below applies to you:

- You are getting one of the following payments:
 - Invalidity Pension,
 - Blind Pension,

- Disability Allowance,
- Incapacity Supplement or Workmen's Compensation with Disablement Pension, for at least 12 months,
- Carer's Allowance, (you may get a single status pass only, if you are under age 66),
- a social security invalidity payment, or a similar payment, for at least 12 months, from a country covered by EC Regulations, or from a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement. See page 5 for details.

or

- You are a specified carer for a person getting Constant Attendance Allowance or Prescribed Relatives Allowance from this Department (you may get a single status pass only, if you are under age 66),

or

- You are blind or severely visually impaired and you satisfy the medical conditions for the Blind Pension,

or

- You are a widow, widower or surviving civil partner aged 60 to 65 inclusive and your late spouse or civil partner held a Free Travel Pass and at the time of their death, you were permanently living together. In this case, you must be getting one of the following payments:
 - State Pension (Transition) (from age 65),
 - Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory Pension,
 - Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's Non-Contributory Pension,
 - One-Parent Family Payment,

- Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's Pension under the Occupational Injuries Benefits Scheme,
- a similar social security payment from a country covered by EC Regulations, or from a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement. (See below for details),
- an **ordinary** Garda Widow's Pension from the Department of Justice and Law Reform.

The countries covered by either EC Regulations or under a Bilateral Agreement are:

- Australia
- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Canada
- Channel Islands
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Italy
- Japan
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Republic of Cyprus (Cyprus South)
- Republic of Korea
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- the Netherlands
- the United Kingdom
- the United States of America

3. How do I get a Free Travel Pass?

You will get a Free Travel Pass automatically at age 66 if you are getting a pension from this Department and permanently live in the State.

If you are **under age 66** and permanently live in the State, you will get a Free Travel Pass automatically when you are awarded an Invalidity Pension, Blind Pension, Disability Allowance or Carer's Allowance .

In all other cases, you must apply for a Free Travel Pass by completing registration form **FT 1**. You can get a registration form:

- on the Internet at **www.welfare.ie**
- text to **51909** (see details on Page 14)
- from your local Social Welfare Office

Send the completed form with any required documents to:

Free Travel Section

FREEPOST
Social Welfare Services
College Road
Sligo.

LoCall: 1890 500 000 (from the Republic of Ireland only)

+353 71 915 7100 (from Northern Ireland or overseas)

Note

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

4. Can anybody join me when travelling?

Your Spouse, Civil Partner or Cohabitant

If you qualify for a Free Travel Pass and you are married, in a civil partnership or cohabiting, you may get a Free Travel Pass that allows your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant to join you for free when travelling. This does not apply if you are under age 66 and you are getting Carer's Allowance or you are a nominated carer for a person who gets Constant Attendance Allowance or Prescribed Relatives Allowance from this Department.

If you are married or in a civil partnership you will get the correct type of pass (to allow your spouse or civil partner to accompany you free of charge) whether you apply for a Free Travel Pass or get one automatically.

If you are cohabiting, you must apply for this type of pass by completing registration form **FT 1**. If you already have a Free Travel Pass (single status), you should return it with the registration form **FT 1**.

A companion (if you cannot travel alone)

You may be eligible to get a Free Travel Companion Pass if you are medically assessed as unfit to travel alone. This type of pass allows any **one** person, aged 16 or over, to accompany you for free, when travelling. See Appendix 1 for the conditions for getting a Free Travel Companion Pass.

If you wish to apply for this type of pass you should contact Free Travel Section at the address shown across.

Note

Only the named person can use the Free Travel Pass, you cannot let another person use it.

5. When can I use my Free Travel Pass?

You may use your Free Travel Pass on the transport services listed below at any time.

- Dublin Bus (except Nitelink and special airport buses)
- Bus Éireann (city services)
- Bus Éireann (long distance services)
- Iarnród Éireann
- DART
- LUAS
- Certain private bus and ferry services
- Certain cross-border services between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland
- Certain services within Northern Ireland*

*This is only available to passholders over age 66 that hold a Senior Smartpass card - See Appendix 3 on page 19 for further details.

6. When can I not use my Free Travel Pass?

You **cannot** use your Free Travel Pass:

- on services not listed in the official rail and bus time tables of Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann or Iarnród Éireann,
- on tours and special bus or rail services,
- on organised group journeys,
- on Dublin Bus Nitelink services,
- on Dublin Bus special airport services, and
- on First Class or Super Class travel on any service (unless you pay the correct fare supplement).

7. Can I use it on any air services?

Journeys to and from the Aran Islands

If you hold a Free Travel Pass and you live permanently on any of the Aran Islands, you may travel for free on Aer Arann services between the islands and Galway city. Aer Arann operates an airline service between the Aran Islands and Aerphort Chonamara at Indreabhan, Co. Galway and also provides a shuttle bus service between Aerphort Chonamara and Galway city.

If you are married, in a civil partnership or cohabiting and hold the correct type of Free Travel Pass, your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant may join you for free. If you hold a Free Travel Companion Pass, any **one** person, aged 16 or over, may join you, free of charge.

You can use the Free travel Pass for up to 12 single journeys (or up to 6 return journeys) between the Aran Islands and Galway city each year. You may make unlimited extra journeys at a special reduced rate.

If you hold a Free Travel Pass and you live on the mainland, you may travel on Aer Arann's airline and bus services between Galway city and the Aran Islands at a special reduced rate. Your spouse, civil partner, cohabitant or a companion may join you and also avail of the special reduced rate.

Journeys to and from Tory Island

If you hold a Free Travel Pass and you live permanently on Tory Island, Co. Donegal, you can travel free of charge on the helicopter service between the island and Falcarragh on the mainland.

You can use the Free Travel Pass for 8 single journeys (or up to 4 return journeys) each year. Your spouse, civil partner, cohabitant or a companion may join you, free of charge.

8. How do I use my Free Travel Pass?

To travel for free, you must always show your Free Travel Pass.

If travelling with Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann or on private bus services:

- you must show your Free Travel Pass to the bus driver when boarding the bus. You do not need a bus ticket to use these services.

Before using Iarnród Éireann mainline, DART or Outer Suburban services:

- you must show your Free Travel Pass at the ticket booking desk in the train station and get a free rail ticket. If you are making your return journey on the same day, you will get a Day Return ticket. In all other cases, you will get a single journey ticket. You will have to get another single ticket before making your return journey.

When using private ferry services:

- you must produce your Free Travel Pass to the ferry operator. In some cases, you will get a ticket for your journey.

Note

You cannot get a refund for any journeys you make without your Free Travel Pass or for any delays encountered while using your Free Travel Pass.

9. Do I need to show proof of my identity?

When using your Free Travel Pass, you must produce your Pass for inspection to an Inspector with the transport operator or to an official of the Department of Social Protection, if asked.

In addition, if you live in Dublin, Cork city, Waterford city, Limerick city or Galway city you must also produce a Free Travel Photo ID, which you can get from CIE offices for free. You should obtain this photopass within one month of receiving your Travel Pass.

You and your accompanying spouse, civil partner or cohabitant may also need to produce evidence of identity, by providing a sample of your signature(s) to the officials mentioned above.

A Free Travel Pass may be taken and returned to the Department of Social Protection if there are good reasons for suspecting that it is being misused.

10. What should I do if I lose my Free Travel Pass?

If you lose your Free Travel Pass or if it is stolen, you should apply for a replacement Free Travel Pass by completing form **FT 27**. You can get an application form:

- on the Internet at **www.welfare.ie**
- from your local Social Welfare Office
- by contacting the **Free Travel Section** at the address on page 6

11. Do I ever need to return my Free Travel Pass?

If any of the following happens, you must send your Free Travel Pass to the address on page 6:

- You no longer live permanently in the State.
- You change address (when you return your Pass you will get a new Pass with your new address).
- You no longer satisfy the conditions that apply to your particular Free Travel entitlement.

12. Where can I get more information?

For more information about Free Travel contact your local Social Welfare Office or **Free Travel Section** at the address on page 6.

For information booklets, application forms and more information on social welfare services:

- Log on to www.welfare.ie.
- Text to **51909** (see details on Page 14).
- LoCall Information Line at **1890 66 22 44** (from the Republic of Ireland only) or **+353 71 91 93313** (from Northern Ireland or overseas).
- Drop in to your local Social Welfare Office or Citizens Information Centre.

Note

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

To request forms, text the form code followed by your name and address to 51909 (from the Republic of Ireland only). Standard text rates apply.

For example, if you wanted to request the Bereavement Grant form, text FORM BG MARY MURPHY 1 NEW STREET, OLD TOWN, CO. DONEGAL.

Social welfare payment or scheme	Form code
Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance	FORM BTSCFA
Bereavement Grant	FORM BG
Carer's Allowance	FORM CARA
Carer's Benefit	FORM CARB
Child Benefit (Form CB1)	FORM CHILD
Disability Allowance	FORM DA
Domiciliary Care Allowance	FORM DCA
Family Income Supplement	FORM FIS
Free Travel	FORM TRAVEL
Fuel Allowance	FORM FUEL
Household Benefits	FORM HHB
Invalidity Pension	FORM INV
Living Alone Increase	FORM LAA
Maternity Benefit	FORM MAT
One Parent Family Payment	FORM OPFP
Respite Care Grant	FORM RCG
State Pension (Non-Contributory)	FORM SPNC
State Pension (Transition/Contributory)	FORM SPC
Widow(er)'s/Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory Pension	FORM WCP
Widow(er)'s/Surviving Civil Partner's Non-Contributory Pension	FORM WNCP

Appendix 1

Free Travel Companion Pass

A Free Travel Companion pass allows any one person, aged 16 or over, to accompany you for free, when travelling.

To qualify for a Free Travel Companion Pass you must satisfy one of the following conditions:

Free Travel Passholders aged 66 or over:

- You are aged 66 to 69 inclusive and are medically assessed as unfit to travel alone,
- You are aged 70 or over and are medically unfit to travel alone,
- You are getting full-time care and attention from someone who is getting Carer's Allowance from this Department,
- You are certified by either the Irish Wheelchair Association or by your GP as being a permanent wheelchair user,
- You are blind or severely visually impaired and
 - you satisfy the blindness conditions for the Blind Pension or
 - you are registered as a blind person with either the National Council for the Blind of Ireland or the National League of the Blind of Ireland.

Free Travel Passholders aged under 66:

- You are getting Disability Allowance or Invalidity Pension or Disablement Pension and Incapacity Supplement and are medically assessed as unfit to travel alone,
- You are blind or severely visually impaired and you:
 - are getting a Blind Pension,
 - or
 - satisfy the blindness condition for the Blind Pension,

- or
- are registered as a blind person with either the National Council for the Blind of Ireland or the National League of the Blind of Ireland,
- You are getting one of the qualifying payments on page 17 and you are certified by either the Irish Wheelchair Association or by your GP as being a permanent wheelchair user,
 - You are getting full-time care and attention from someone who is getting Carer's Allowance from this Department. To qualify for a companion pass based on this condition, you must be entitled to a Free Travel Pass in your own right. See conditions for free travel on pages 3, 4 and 5.

Free Travel Companion Pass for a visually-impaired child:

A visually impaired child will qualify for a Free Travel Companion Pass if they are under age 18 and either they:

- satisfy the blindness condition for a Blind Pension,
- or
- are registered with the National Council for the Blind or the National League of the Blind of Ireland.

Parent or Guardian:

You must return the child's Free Travel Companion Pass to Free Travel Section if:

- the child's eyesight improves and they no longer satisfy either of the conditions above,
- the child no longer lives permanently in the State,
- the child changes address (when you return the Free Travel Pass you will get a new pass for the child with the new address).

Only the child named on the Free Travel Companion Pass can use it, they cannot give it to another person to use.

QUALIFYING PAYMENTS

These payments apply if you are under age 66:

- Invalidity Pension,
- Blind Pension,
- Incapacity Supplement or Workmen's Compensation with Disablement Pension for at least 12 months (under the Occupational Injuries Benefit Scheme),
- Disability Allowance,
- an Invalidity Payment or similar payment for at least 12 months from a country covered by EC Regulations or from a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement.

Appendix 2

Free Travel on cross-border journeys

You may use your Free Travel Pass to travel free on cross-border journeys between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. If you are married, in a civil partnership or cohabiting and hold the correct type of Free Travel Pass, your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant may join you for free. Or, if you hold a Free Travel Companion Pass, one person aged 16 or over may join you for free.

If you live in Northern Ireland and you hold a Northern Ireland Concessionary Travel Pass you may also travel for free on cross-border journeys. However, your spouse, civil partner, cohabitant or companion cannot travel for free on such journeys unless they also hold a Concessionary Travel Pass in their own right.

Journeys covered

Your cross-border journey must start on one side of the border and end on the other side.

You can only use one mode of transport, either bus or train for your journey. You cannot combine these and still travel for free.

You must use one through-ticket for your journey. This means, for example, that you can travel for free by train from Cork to Belfast, as long as the free ticket you got in Cork railway station clearly states Belfast as your final destination. The same applies when you travel by bus on cross-border journeys.

Appendix 3

All Ireland Free Travel

If you are aged **66 or over**, the All Ireland Free Travel Scheme will entitle you to travel for free on transport services operating internally within Northern Ireland, using a Senior SmartPass card.

Who can travel?

To qualify for free travel within Northern Ireland, you must be aged **66 or over**. Under the terms of the concessionary fares scheme in Northern Ireland, only the SmartPass holder is entitled to travel free of charge. If you have a married, civil partner, cohabitant or companion pass from the Department of Social Protection, the SmartPass does not entitle your spouse, civil partner, cohabitant or companion to accompany you for free within Northern Ireland. Your spouse, civil partner, cohabitant or companion may continue to travel with you for free on cross-border journeys.

You cannot use your existing free travel pass for free travel within Northern Ireland, however you should continue to use it for free travel within the Republic of Ireland.

Application

To avail of free travel within Northern Ireland, you must first obtain a Senior SmartPass card.

How can you get a Senior Smartpass?

An application form (**FTNI1**) must be completed (using black pen or biro).

Application forms are available as follows:

- At your local Social Welfare Office (details of which are listed on the green pages of the phone directory and also on the Department's website **www.welfare.ie/EN/ContactUs/Pages/default.aspx**)
- At your local Citizens Information Centre.

When you have completed the application form:

The completed application form must be brought to your nearest local Social Welfare Office along with:

- * A recent passport standard colour photograph and
- * Evidence of your identity (driving license/passport/any other form of photo id, if available) and
- * Evidence of address (a recent utility bill, e.g. electricity/gas/phone/waste charges bill or a bank/building society/credit union statement) and
- * Current Free Travel Pass

Following processing of your application, your Senior SmartPass card, together with instructions for use, will be posted direct to your home address by post. It may take up to six weeks to process the application.

There is no charge for your first Senior Smartpass card. There may be a charge for replacement cards. Please keep your Senior Smartpass card in a safe place.

Refunds

Any tickets purchased within Northern Ireland while waiting for your Senior SmartPass are non-refundable.