



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

Covid-19 Introduction of simplified Unemployment Payments for employees and payments possible through employers - Minister Doherty

Sunday, 15 March, 2020

As part of the Government's response to the national emergency that is the COVID-19 outbreak, this evening the Government is asking employers, if at all possible, to continue to pay workers during this period - at least at the jobseeker rate of €203 per week.

Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection Regina Doherty emphasised:

“Where employers, who have to cease trading because of the impact of social distancing, continue to pay workers they will be able to claim refunds from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. A temporary refund scheme is being established for this purpose. This refund will be for €203 per worker per week. This means that workers retain their link with employers and there is no need for them personally to submit a jobseekers claim.”

The Minister explained that refunds will take some time to process but in the meantime the Banks will provide working capital finance in the form of overdrafts or short-term loans to cover costs.

The Minister announced that in addition to this fund the Department is introducing a new scheme for anyone whose employer is unable to continue to pay them due to a downturn in business. Minister Doherty will bring to Cabinet tomorrow details of the new scheme.

This evening, Minister Doherty stated:

“Ireland has entered uncharted territory as a consequence of the spread of Covid-19. This is now both a public health and economic issue.

“In light of the significant volumes of jobseeker applications expected this week, the Department will from tomorrow be introducing a new Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment specifically designed to get thousands of people into payment as quickly as possible.”

The new payment that has been put in place will be available to all employees and the self-employed who have lost employment due to a downturn in economic activity caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The payment will have a simple one – page application form and will be paid for a period of 6 weeks at a flat rate payment of €203 per week.

Individuals applying for the payment will be required to apply for the normal jobseeker's payments within this 6 week period. Once this normal jobseeker claim is subsequently received, the Department will process these claims and reconcile payments at that time. This will involve backdating increased payments for certain customers.

For those workers whose employers do lay them off without pay, and mindful of social distancing requirements, there is no need to visit an Intreo centre. Intreo centres have to apply social distancing recommendations so queues will be long and people who call may have to wait a long time.

Application forms can be downloaded online and submitted by post. Those people with a registered MyGovID account can make their claim online.

People are asked to assist the Department over the next few days by applying for income support from the Department through our online channels.

Information for people claiming a payment

There is no need for to attend your local Intreo Centre but you can apply 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 and returned to us to PO BOX 12896 Dublin 1;
- 2) You can apply for another income support from us is through our online portal 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.

Minister Doherty added:

“I want to reassure our clients that the Department will process all applications for income support as soon as possible. The new payment will speed this process up and ensure that our customers receive a payment from the Department in as short a time as possible. Payments will issue based on date of application, not date of processing, meaning that all payments will be back dated. We would ask customers to please keep checking your Bank Account as payment may issue in advance of us formally notifying you.”

ENDS

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