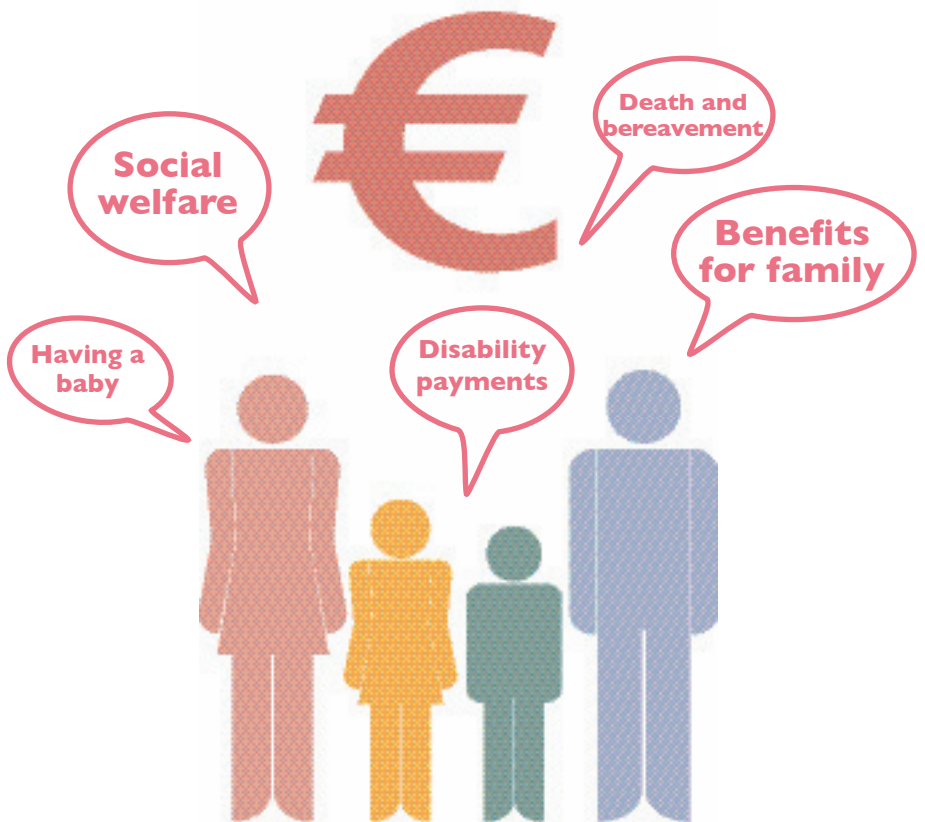


Welcome Pack for Immigrants in Clare

Welfare supports and entitlements



Compiled by Clare Immigrant Support Centre



Social welfare services

The social welfare system in Ireland provides a range of income and family supports and other services. They target people with particular needs, for example, those who are unemployed, families, people with disabilities and carers

Social welfare payments fall into three types.

Social Insurance or Contributory payments: These are available to those who have paid a specific number of Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions while working. Whether or not you qualify for a payment depends on the number of PRSI (see page 7 of 'Employment' leaflet) contributions you have made.

Means tested or non-contributory schemes: These are based on you and your family's circumstances. You are required to satisfy a 'means test' and to be 'habitually resident' (see box) in the state.

This test establishes whether your income is below a certain level. The level will vary depending on the schemes and

What is 'Habitual residence'?

Habitual residence considers things like:

- how long and how continuously you have lived in Ireland;
- the length and purpose of any absence from Ireland;
- the type and pattern of your employment;
- your general long-term plans for the future; and
- your primary area of interest.

Your Citizens Information Centre

- Bindon Lane, Ennis, Co Clare.
Phone (065) 684 1221
- www.citizensinformation.ie

your family circumstances.

Universal payments: These include payments like Child Benefit, Free Travel and Respite Care Grant. They do not depend on PRSI contributions nor a means test but some other conditions must be satisfied such as Habitual Residence for Child Benefit.

Citizens Information 

Payments for children

Child Benefit (previously called Children's Allowance) is the most common payment to families with children. It is paid to parents or guardians of children under 16 years of age, or under 19 years of age if the child is in full-time education, FÁS Youthreach training or has a disability.

This money is paid once a month. You can choose to have the payment paid directly into your bank account or to collect it from your local post office.

When should I apply?

You need to apply for Child Benefit within 12 months of:

- when your baby is born;
- the month the child became a member of your family (for example, if you adopted a child); or
- the month your family came to live in Ireland.

You must register the baby

If your baby is born in Ireland, you must register their birth. You can register your child's birth in:

- the hospital where they are born;
- Civil Registration Office, HSE Sandfield

What is the EEA?

The European Economic Area (EEA) unites the 25 EU Member States and the three EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) into an Internal Market governed by the same basic rules.

Centre, Ennis – phone (065) 686 8050; or

- the Civil Registration Office, St. Camillus' Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Limerick – phone: (061) 483 763

EU regulations

If you are an EU/EEA citizen or Swiss national working in Ireland, you qualify for Child Benefit.

Non-EU/EEA citizens

Non-EU/EEA citizens must be 'habitually resident' in Ireland to qualify for Child Benefit. If you are a non-EU/EEA citizen and legally working in this State, you may qualify for Child Benefit if your child is also resident here.

How to apply

All forms are available on the website www.welfare.ie or your local Citizens Information Centre office, www.citizensinformation.ie. You may be waiting for up to 12 months for your claim to be processed.

Early Childcare Supplement

The Early Childcare Supplement (ECS) monthly payment was halved to €1.50 per child on 1 May 2009. The supplement will be abolished at the end of 2009 and will be replaced in January 2010 with a free preschool year of Early Childhood, Care and Education (ECCE) for all children between the ages of three years three months and four years six months. Details of preschool services which have entered the scheme are available from the Clare Childcare Committee. Phone (065) 686 4862.

Other payments – Community Welfare

Community Welfare Services are provided by Community Welfare Officers (CWOs) in the HSE (Health Service Executive). CWOs are based in health centres and manage the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme.

Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance is a weekly allowance paid to people who do not have enough means to meet their needs and those of their qualified adult dependants or any qualified children. You will normally qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance if you meet the following conditions:

- you live in the state;
- you satisfy the means test;
- you have applied for any other benefit or allowance you may be entitled to; and
- you satisfy the ‘habitual residence’ test (see box on page 2), except for the Exceptional Needs Payment.

As everyone’s individual circumstances are different, it is best to contact the Community Welfare Officer directly to discuss your particular situation.

What type of payments?

The types of payments made under this scheme include:

- Supplementary Welfare Allowance;
- Rent Supplement;
- Mortgage Interest Supplement;

- Diet and Heating Supplements;
- Back to School Clothing and Footwear Scheme;
- Fuel Allowance; and
- Crèche (in exceptional circumstances only when supported by a public health nurse, social worker or other health professional).

Other supplements

There are other supplements to cover exceptional weekly costs you might have that you cannot pay for from your own resources. Examples include:

- travel to hospital or clinics on a weekly basis where you have no other help; and
- if someone living in your home has a severe illness and needs extra money to pay for things like an oxygen tank.

There is also an Exceptional Needs Payments for things like buggies, clothing and funeral costs.

There are Urgent Needs Payments to help with things, not covered by general insurance, like:

- fire;
 - flood; and
 - storms.
- The Community Welfare Officer (CWO) will always assess each case and tell you what you are entitled to. CWOs hold a number of clinics every

week usually in a health centre and you do not need an appointment.

In some areas CWOs will also deal with applications relating to medical cards and Nursing Home Subventions (money towards the cost of nursing home care).

Appeals

If you are not happy about your CWO's decision, or if your application has been refused you may appeal to the independent appeals section of the Health Service Executive who will ask for your file so they can examine your application and the decision made about it. The address is: Appeals Office, Health Service Executive, St Joseph's Hospital, Mulgrave St, Limerick. Phone: (061) 461 359; Lo Call 1850 460 055

How to apply

You should apply for a Supplementary Welfare Allowance or advice on services in your area to your Community



Welfare Officer at your local health centre as soon as the need arises. The address is: Community Welfare Officer, HSE (Health Service Executive) Health Office, Sandfield Centre, Highfield Park, Ennis. Phone: (065) 686 8090.

Or contact your local Citizen's Information Centre, in Bindon Lane, Ennis, phone (065) 684 1221. LoCall: 1890 777 121, Monday to Friday, 9am-9pm

Get more information at the Citizens Information Centre

Citizens Information Centres provide comprehensive information on all aspects of public services and what people in Ireland are entitled to. Citizen's information is also available by calling in person to a Citizens Information Centre (CIC) near you where you will get free and confidential advice. The Ennis centre phone number is: (065) 684 1221. Citizens Information Centres, LoCall: 1890 777 121, Monday to Friday, 9am-9pm. Website: www.citizensinformation.ie

DISABILITIES

What about people with disabilities?

There are a number of other social welfare payments for people who are sick or have a disability. To receive these, you must be certified as sick or disabled by a doctor. Below are details of the benefits that the Department of Social Welfare pays.

Disability Allowance is a means-tested weekly payment you receive if you have a disability and are aged between 16 and 65 years.

Injury Benefit is one of the benefits available under the Occupational Injuries Benefit Scheme. It is a weekly payment you receive if you are unfit for work due to an accident at work, while travelling directly to or from work or an occupational disease.

The Medical Care Scheme allows you to get a refund of the costs of medical care and attention as a result of an injury caused by an accident at work or as a result of your work. You must have contracted a prescribed occupational disease.

You can receive **Disablement Benefit**

if you suffer a loss of physical or mental faculty because of an accident at work, an accident travelling directly to or from work, or a prescribed disease contracted at work.

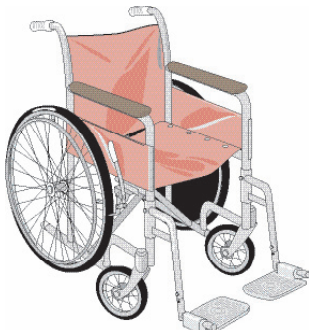
If you are not entitled to sick pay from work you may get **Illness Benefit** if you have enough (PRSI) social insurance contributions. If you do not have enough social insurance contributions, you should contact the Community Welfare Officer:

Invalidity Pension is a weekly payment for people covered by social insurance who cannot work because of a long-term illness or disability.

You can get more information, an application form and other details from your local Social Welfare Office or Citizens Information Centre. You can also log on to www.citizensinformation.ie or www.welfare.ie. There is an information booklet available from your CIC.

The Blind Pension is a means tested payment you can receive if you are blind and visually impaired and normally living in Ireland.

For more information: Contact your local Social Welfare Office or phone the Department of Social and Family Affairs LoCall leaflet request line at 1890 202 325.



DENTAL, EYE AND OTHER SERVICES

What is the Treatment Benefit Scheme?

A contribution towards the cost of dental, optical and aural services is available to insured workers and retired people who have the required number of PRSI contributions.

These services are provided through the Treatment Benefit Scheme, which is run by the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Medical card holders are legally entitled to dental, ophthalmic and aural services from the Health Service Executive (HSE) but, in practice, the availability of these services varies from area to area.

If you have enough PRSI contributions,

under the Treatment Benefit Scheme, you may qualify for:

- dental benefit;
- optical (eye treatment) benefit;
- aural (hearing) benefit;
- contact lenses; and
- hearing aids.

Treatment Benefit Section

- Department of Social and Family Affairs Letterkenny Co. Donegal, phone: (01) 704 3000

How is death dealt with in Ireland?

When a person dies in Ireland someone must identify them and the cause of death established. If someone dies suddenly and unexpectedly, you may need to notify the Gardai and the Coroner. You should also notify the next of kin (closest family members), family doctor (often called a GP) and the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths.

Funeral directors and undertakers in Ireland deal with the arrangements for the burial, or cremation or transport to another country. They can organise everything from the burial plot to religious services if you wish.

If you have enough PRSI contributions, you may be entitled to a Bereavement Grant – a once-off payment to help with funeral costs. The Social Welfare Office

pays this grant by cheque to the person responsible for paying the funeral bill. Apply to your local Social Welfare Office.

There is also a means tested burial grant which is available from the Community Welfare Officer at Sandfield House.

More information on death

- How to register a death: www.groireland.ie
- Helping children to deal with death: www.barnardos.ie
- Care for people with life-limiting illnesses: www.hospice-foundation.ie
- Information about dying, death and bereavement www.endoflife.ie
- Community Suicide Bereavement support group: 1850 201 249
- Bereavement booklet available from your local CIC.

Useful contacts

Citizens Information Centres

Location	Address	Phone
Ennis	Bindon Lane, Ennis, Co Clare	(065) 684 1221
Shannon	Shannon Business Centre, Co Clare	(061) 364 704
Kilrush	Francis Street, Kilrush, Co Clare	(065) 908 0056
Scariff	East Clare Community, Co-Op, Main Street, Scariff, Co. Clare	(061) 921 286

Clare Immigrant Support Centre

Ennis	Unit 13 Carmody Street Business Park, Ennis, Co Clare	(065) 682 2026
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HSE Local Health Office

Community Welfare Officer	HSE (Health Service Executive) Health Office, Sandfield Centre, Highfield Park, Ennis.	(065) 686 80390
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Social Welfare Offices

All except Tulla are wheelchair accessible

Location	Address	Phone
Ennistymon	Parliament Street, Ennistymon, Co. Clare	(065) 707 2528
Tulla	Main Street, Tulla, Co. Clare	(065) 683 1908
Kilrush	45 Moore Street, Kilrush, Co Clare	(065) 908 0030
Ennis	Government Buildings, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co Clare	(065) 678 00