



European
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EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

Addendum to the
10th National Report on the implementation
of the European Social Charter
submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND

(Article 23 for the period
01/01/2008 – 31/12/2011)

Report registered by the Secretariat on
8 March 2013

CYCLE 2013

Article 23 – The Right Of Elderly Persons To Social Protection

Updated Situation :-

In addition to social insurance schemes for old age (see Report on Article 12), the Department of Social Protection administers non-contributory pensions for persons over 66. In the period under review, these pensions were payable to all residents, regardless of nationality, who satisfied the conditions as to age and means and habitual residence.

A person may switch from contributory old age pension (or from receipt of a qualified adult increase thereon) to the non-contributory pension if the non-contributory entitlement is higher.

The means assessment includes income and assets, but the assessment of assets does not include the value of the place of residence. The first €30 does not affect the rate of pension, which is reduced thereafter in steps of €2.50 weekly. The rates of pension between 2008 and 2011 were as follows:

Non-Contributory Pension Rates	2008 €	2009 €	2010 €	2011
Personal rate (maximum)	212.00	219.00	219.00	219.00
Minimum rate	4.50	4.00	4.00	4.00
Maximum increase for qualified adult (under 66 years – personal rate is payable to each of a couple over 66)	131.30	135.60	130.10	124.80
Increase for qualified child	24.00	26.00	29.80	29.80
Increase over 80 years of age	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
Increase where living alone	7.70	7.70	7.70	7.70

For further information please see:

<http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Publications/SW116/Documents/sw116.pdf>

The Social Welfare Law Reform and Pensions Act 2006 provided for the merging of all non-contributory payments over pension age into a single age pension, renamed the State Pension (non-contributory).

Various amendments to the means test were introduced both in the above 2006 Act and in the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2007, in each case improving the rate of entitlement to persons with low means. A specific **earnings** disregard of €200 per week for the State Pension (Non-contributory) was introduced so that income from employment can be earned without losing pension entitlements.

A range of non-statutory schemes (commonly known as “Free Schemes”) are administered by the Department of Social Protection. These include:

Free travel – which is a universal scheme for all resident persons over 66 years of age, and persons in receipt of certain disability payments. The transport companies (including national rail, provincial buses, city buses, and some private bus operators) receive an annual payment from the Department in respect of free travel provided to persons holding a “travel pass”. The restriction on “rush hour” travel on city buses has been removed.

Fuel Allowance – during the period under review for this report the up to date information on fuel allowance is as follow; a supplement of €20.00 per week is paid to recipients of specified benefits, including social insurance and assistance old age pensions, paid during 32 weeks from September 2011 to May 2012, to offset the additional cost of heating in the winter.

***Free Electricity (or gas) Allowance** – the fixed charges on electricity accounts, plus a standard amount of usage, is free to recipients of specified benefits. If a person does not have electricity, a comparable concession is allowed on gas expenses.

***Free Telephone Allowance** – covers the cost of line rental plus a certain amount of call-charges in each billing period.

***Free Television licence** – covers the annual licence fee for a colour television set.

*The last 3 of these (collectively known as household benefits) are payable in respect of all persons who are over 70 years of age or, subject to certain conditions, persons under 70 who are in receipt of specified payments.

For further information, please see:

<http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Publications/SW40/Documents/sw40.pdf> (Free travel)

<http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Publications/SW107/Documents/sw107.pdf> (Household Benefits)

The total expenditure by the Department of Social Protection, in relation to services for the elderly, from 2007 to 2011 was:

Payment Type	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Increase of Payments 2007 to 2011
	€ millions					
Social Insurance						
State Pension (Contributory)	2755	3118	3368	3452	3623	32%
State Pension (Transition)	79	92	105	108	132	67%
Social Assistance						
State Pension (Non-Contributory)	920	973	1000	976	972	6%
Total Payment	3754	4183	4473	4536	4727	26%

* Note In our previous report 3,879m was quoted for the 2007 figure, this included 125m paid for pre-retirement allowance- this has been reclassified as a working age income support.

The total number of people paid by the Department of Social Protection, in relation to services for the elderly, from 2007 to 2011 was:

Payment Type	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% Increase of Recipients 2007 to 2011
	Recipients					
Social Insurance						
State Pension (Contributory)	237599	250117	265102	280419	296995	25%
State Pension (Transition)	5851	7242	8378	10206	12110	107%
Social Assistance						
State Pension (Non-Contributory)	97726	97784	97798	97179	96749	Minus 1%
Total Recipients per year	341176	355143	371278	387804	405854	19%

All information quoted in the two tables above were obtained from DSP annual reports for the pertinent year <http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Publications/annstats/Pages/index.aspx>.

Housing Issues

Housing Need Assessment

A person can apply for Local Authority Housing if they are in need of housing and cannot afford it from his /her resources. A statutory assessment of housing need is carried out every three years by all housing authorities.

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2009, provides for a new process of housing needs assessment for applicants for social housing support. The Social Housing Assessment Regulations 2011, which came into force on 1 April, 2011, standardised both the income limits and the definition of income.

The Housing Agency's Housing Needs Assessment 2008 and 2011 reports are available on the Department's website at www.environ.ie.

Voluntary & Co-operative Housing - Capital Assistance Scheme

Under Section 6 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1992 approved voluntary housing bodies may provide accommodation to meet special housing needs such as those of the elderly, people with a disability, homeless or returning emigrants. Under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), in operation since 1984, funding of up to 100% of the approved cost of a project can be provided under the terms of the scheme in cases where all prospective

tenancies are taken from the local authority housing waiting list. Where the approved bodies retain 25% of tenancy nomination rights, funding of up to 95% of the approved cost of a project is available. Allocations are made by the approved housing body in consultation with the local authority. However, 25% of tenancies can be allocated to elderly returning emigrants who are taken off a list of persons assessed as in need of housing by the SafeHome organisation who carry out an assessment of applications for housing from such emigrants. Funding for projects is provided by way of a grant from this Department to the local authority who provide the funding to the relevant approved housing body in the form of a 30 year mortgage. The loan charges are waived provided the terms of the scheme are complied with.

To date the Voluntary and Co-operative manage some 24,000 units of accommodation.

Useful links

www.icsh.ie

www.nabco.ie

www.focusireland.ie

www.simoncommunity.ie

<http://www.respond.ie/>

<http://www.cluid.ie/>

Improvements to existing local authority dwellings

Under the Department's Social Housing Investment Programme, local authorities are allocated capital funding each year in respect of a range of measures to improve the standard and overall quality of their social housing stock. The programme includes an allocation of funding towards *Local Authority Extensions /Disabled Persons Grant Scheme* and *Improvement Works in Lieu of local authority housing (IWIL)* and also a retrofitting measure aimed at improving the energy efficiency of older apartments and houses by reducing heat loss through the fabric of the building and the installation of high-efficiency condensing boilers under the *Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme*

Local Authority Extensions / disabled Persons Grants Scheme

This scheme enables local authorities to adapt units rented from the local authority to meet specific needs such as overcrowding or the needs of a tenant with a disability.

Improvement Works in Lieu of local authority housing (IWIL's)

Under this scheme, a local authority may improve or extend a privately owned house to eliminate defects or to provide additional accommodation where it is necessary to eliminate overcrowding or to accommodate a person not at present residing in the house. Persons benefiting under the scheme are required to pay a weekly or monthly charge calculated in relation to their means and the cost of the works carried out by the local authority.

Energy Efficiency/Retrofitting Programme

To ensure that the stock of 130,000 local authority-owned dwellings is maintained at high standard, achieves an improved level of energy performance, reduces emissions and yields an important fuel poverty dividend for low income households, funding is provided for the retrofitting of insulation and other energy efficiency measures in vacant properties, both casual and planned, across the local authority housing stock.

Currently the programme is specifically targeting vacant units and has provided increased financial assistance to facilitate their early return to productive use. Returning vacant stock to use, in as short a time as possible and at a reasonable cost continues to be the Department's

top priority under the Social Housing Improvement Programme. In the case of casual vacancies funding of up to €15,000 (depending on the energy saving achieved) will be provided for the improvement in the energy efficiency with an additional €3,000 per unit for pre-letting repairs.

Progress to date: Since the commencement of the programme in 2009 to end 2011 some 5,600 local authority housing units have been improved under the Retrofitting Programme

Special Needs (private accommodation)

Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes for Older People and people with a Disability

In order to facilitate the continued independent occupancy of their own homes by older people and people with a disability, and following a review of the old *Disabled Persons, Essential Repairs Grant Schemes and Special Housing aid for the Elderly*, which was administered by the HSE a revised suite of Housing Adaptation Grant Schemes was implemented in November 2007. Statutory Instrument 670 of 2007 refers. The revised schemes targets the available resources to those in most need, streamline operational and administrative procedures and ensures equity and consistency of operation across all local authority areas.

Three schemes are available for people with special needs and are administered through Local Authorities:

- Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability assists in the provision/adaptation of accommodation to meet the accommodation needs of people with a disability. Qualifying works include access ramps; stair-lifts; downstairs toilet facilities and accessible showers;
- Mobility Aids Grant Scheme provides grants to cover a basic suite of works to address mobility problems, primarily but not exclusively, associated with ageing. Qualifying works include grab-rails; access ramps; level access showers and stair-lifts.
- Housing Aid for Older People Scheme aims to improve the existing housing conditions of older people. Qualifying works include structural repairs or improvements; re-wiring; drylining; repairs to/replacement of windows and doors and provision of central heating, water and sanitary services.

Progress: In 2011 some 11,787 grants was paid towards works under the three schemes.

Housing statistics may be accessed at:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/StatisticsandRegularPublications/HousingStatistics/>

