

**47<sup>th</sup> Report presented by the**  
**GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND to the COUNCIL OF EUROPE**  
**For the period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020**  
**in accordance with Article 74 of the European Code of Social Security**  
**Submitted on 29 July 2020**

Ireland has accepted:

Part III	Sickness Benefit
Part IV	Unemployment Benefit
Part V	Old-Age Benefit
Part VII	Family Benefit
Part X	Survivor's Benefit

## **Introduction**

This is Ireland's 47th report in accordance with Article 74 of the European Code of Social Security (the Code) . It covers the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

The first section of the report lists the principal legislative amendments to Irish social security legislation during the reporting period.

The next section which comprises the bulk of the report sets out the position with regard to each Part of the Code which Ireland has accepted (in addition to the parts which must be applied by every Contracting party, these are Parts III, IV, V, VII and X). This includes any relevant changes to scheme rules and details of the numbers of people covered, the rates of payment and levels of expenditure<sup>1</sup>.

The final part of the report includes three appendices as follows :

- Appendix I is the draft resolution on the on the application of the European Code of Social Security by Ireland (Period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019) and Ireland's responses to the questions raised therein.
- Appendix II sets out number of contributors insured at each class of PRSI for 2018.
- Appendix III sets out the reference wage data for 2018.

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<sup>1</sup> Rate of payment for 2020 are set out. With regard to numbers of recipients and levels of expenditure the most recently available published data relates to 2018.

## **Principal Changes in Irish Social Security Legislation**

### **Changes to Primary Legislation 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020**

Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Act 2018 [No. 37 of 2018](#)

Social Welfare Act 2019 [No. 34 of 2019](#)

Parent's Leave and Benefit Act 2019 [No. 35 of 2019](#)

Social Welfare (No. 2) Act 2019 [No. 48 of 2019](#)

Health (Preservation and Protection and other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest)  
Act 2020 [No. 1 of 2020](#)

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### **Changes to Secondary Legislation 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020**

Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 10)  
(Assessment of Means) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 303 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Supplementary Welfare Allowance) (Amendment) (No. 5)  
(Assessment of Means) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 304 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 (Specified Bodies) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 344 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare Act 2019 (Part 2) (Commencement) Order 2019 [S.I. No. 550 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 11)  
(Jobseekers Benefit (Self-Employed)) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 551 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Contributions and Insurability) (Amendment) (No. 1)  
(Jobseekers Benefit (Self-Employed)) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 552 of 2019](#)

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Parent's Leave and Benefit Act 2019 (Commencement of Certain Provisions of Part 5) Order  
2019 [S.I. No. 553 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 12)  
(Parent's Benefit) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 554 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Temporary Provisions) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 580 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Contributions and Insurability) (Amendment) (No. 2)  
(Modified Insurance)) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 591 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare Act 2019 (Commencement) Order 2019 [S.I. No. 615 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 13)  
(Working Family Payment) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 634 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 14)  
(Carers) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 635 of 2019](#)

Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 15)  
(Jobseeker's Transitional Payment) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 636 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No.16)  
(Assessment of Means) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 666 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Supplementary Welfare Allowance) (Amendment) (No. 6)  
(Assessment of Means) Regulations 2019 [S.I. No. 667 of 2019](#)

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Social Welfare (Employment Contributions) Regulations 2020 [S. I. No. 7 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Section 290A) (Agreement) Order 2020 [S.I. No. 19 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (No. 2) Act 2019 (Section 4) (Commencement) Order 2020 [S.I. No. 38 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 1)  
(Payments after Death) Regulations 2020 [S.I. No. 50 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 2)  
(Emergency Measures in the Public Interest-Jobseeker's Allowance) Regulations 2020 [S.I. No. 94 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 3)

(Emergency Measures in the Public Interest-Jobseeker's Benefit) Regulations 2020 [S.I. No. 95 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Increase for Qualified Adult) Regulations 2020 [S. I. No. 96 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 4) (Illness Benefit payments arising from COVID-19) Regulations 2020 [S.I. No. 97 of 2020](#)

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Health (Preservation and Protection and other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) Act 2020 (Continuation of Part 2) Order 2020 [S.I. No. 155 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 5) (Emergency Measures in the Public Interest-Jobseeker's Allowance) Regulations 2020 [S.I. No. 163 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 6) (Emergency Measures in the Public Interest-Jobseeker's Benefit) Regulations 2020 [S.I. No. 164 of 2020](#)

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Health (Preservation and Protection and other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) Act 2020 (Continuation of Part 2) (No. 2) Order 2020 [S.I. No. 207 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Increase for Qualified Adult) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 [S.I. No. 221 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No.7)  
(Emergency Measures in the Public Interest-Jobseeker's Allowance) Regulations 2020

[S.I. No. 222 of 2020](#)

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Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) (Amendment) (No. 8)  
(Emergency Measures in the Public Interest-Jobseeker's Benefit) Regulations 2020

[S.I. No. 223 of 2020](#)

**Position with regard to those Parts of the Code Accepted by Ireland**

**Part II. Medical Care**

This Part of the Code has not been accepted by Ireland.

## Part III. Sickness Benefit

### Article 15

Sub-paragraph (a) applies.

There are no changes to the classes of employees covered for Illness Benefit since the last report.

The Annual Statistical Report for the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection details the numbers and classes of insured persons. The figures in relation to PRSI for 2018 are listed in Appendix II.

**Detailed explanations of the Classes can be accessed at:**

[http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/SW19\\_17.pdf](http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/SW19_17.pdf)

**Classes of employees who are covered for Illness Benefit:**

- Persons in Classes A, E, H and P– total 2,197,725

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Class A</b>	2,167,867	2,189,634
<b>Class E</b>	174	157
<b>Class H</b>	8,029	7,934
<b>Class P</b>	3	0
	2,176,073	2,197,725

**Classes of employees not covered for Illness Benefit:**

- Persons in classes B, C, D and J – total 113,159

(Class J includes an unknown number of employees who are over pension age)

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Class B</b>	18,384	16,756
<b>Class C</b>	318	269
<b>Class D</b>	43,376	39,674
<b>Class J</b>	43,501	56,460
	105,579	113,159

**Total number of employees in 2018 = 2,625,768**

**Percentage insured for Illness Benefit in 2018 = 84%**

The following Classes are not counted as employees:

- Class K applies to Public Office holders, additional income of a self-employed person and other income such as rental, investment income, dividends and interest on deposits and savings;
- Class S is for self-employed persons;
- Class M applies to persons with no liability for a contribution;
- Voluntary contributors are persons who have ceased employment but are contributing to maintain entitlements to long-term benefits such as pensions.

## **Article 16**

### **Illness Benefit Rate**

The following increases came in on 26 March 2018 (payment per week):

- The maximum Personal rate of Illness Benefit increased from €193.00 to €198.00.
- The maximum rate for a Qualified Adult also increased from €128.80 to €131.40.
- The rate for a Qualified Child - €31.80

The following increases came in on 25 March 2019 (payment per week):

- The maximum personal rate of Illness Benefit increased from €198.00 to €203.00.
- The maximum rate for a Qualified Adult increased from €131.40 to €134.70.
- The rate for a Qualified Child increased from
  - €31.80 to €34.00 for a child under 12
  - €31.80 to €37.00 for a child over 12

Note that up to this time there had been a standard child payment. From March 2019, payment depends on the age of the child.

The following increases came in on 06 January 2020 (payment per week):

- The rate for a Qualified Child increased from
  - €34.00 to €36.00 for a child under 12 per week
  - €37.00 to €40.00 for a child over 12 per week

There was no increase in the personal rate or the rate for a Qualified Adult at this time.

In response to the Covid-19 Pandemic special illness benefit arrangements (including a higher rate of payment) were introduced on an emergency basis. These are detailed in the following section (re Article 17).

**The 2017 rate** used in the comparison to the reference wage below includes the personal rate of €193.00, the rate for a qualified adult of €128.10, and the rate for a qualified child of €29.80.

**The 2018 rate** used in the comparison to the reference wage below includes the maximum personal rate of €198.00, the rate for a qualified adult of €131.40 and the rate for a qualified child of €31.80. The Child Benefit Rate for both 2017 and 2018 is €140 per month per child so the weekly amount for two children is €64.60.

### **Article 66 Title II**

#### **Reference wage / Illness Benefit (couple and 2 children)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Wage</b>	<b>All'nce</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Benefit</b>	<b>All'nce</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
	€	*€	€	€	*€	€	
<b>2017</b>	727	64.60	791.60	380.70	64.60	445.30	56
<b>2018</b>	756	64.60	820.60	393.00	64.60	457.60	56

\* The family allowances for a worker in this column include Child Benefit and the rate of Working family Payment appropriate to a family with this level of income. In 2017/2018 the level of earnings exceeded the threshold for the working Family Payment allowance and so this figure includes Child Benefit only, payable in 2017 and 2018 at €140 per

month per child for each of the first 2 children.  $\text{€}140 \times 2 \times 12 / 52 = \text{€}64.60$  (rounded to the nearest 10) per week.

\*Please note that temporary addition to IQA rate (Increase for Qualified Adult) during COVID-19 pandemic has not been included. The weekly rate of an IQA has temporarily increased from €134.70 to €147.00 for the duration of the payment.

### **Article 66 Title V**

**Reference wage (single person, male) /Maximum weekly rate of Illness Benefit (single person, male or female)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Wage €</b>	<b>Benefit €</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>2017</b>	727	193.00	27
<b>2018</b>	756	198.00	26

Full details of payment rates are published on the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection's website: [http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/SW19\\_Post\\_2003.aspx](http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/SW19_Post_2003.aspx)

### **Article 17**

There are no changes to the conditions for receipt of Illness Benefit (termed standard Illness Benefit for the purposes of this report) since the last report.

## **Emergency measures in response to Covid-19**

An enhanced Illness Benefit payment was introduced on a temporary basis in response to COVID-19.

The payment is available from 9 March 2020 to 10 August 2020 to persons who are absent from work and confined to their home or a medical facility, having been –

- (a) diagnosed with COVID-19, or
- (b) certified by a medical practitioner or notified by the public health authorities as being a probable source of infection of COVID-19 and are self-isolating.

COVID-19 Illness Benefit is available to both employed and self-employed persons who have been told by a doctor to self-isolate as they are a probable source of infection of COVID-19 or who have been diagnosed with COVID 19.

To qualify for COVID-19 Illness Benefit a person must

- be aged between 18 and 66 years,
- be employed or self-employed and have worked in the four weeks preceding the relevant diagnosis or certification,
- have a current contract of employment if employed, and
- have the necessary medical certification to support their application.

It is paid

- from the first day of absence from work,
- for 2 weeks where person is in medically-required self-isolation due to COVID 19,
- for up to 10 weeks for a confirmed diagnosis of COVID 19,

- at a personal rate of €350 a week (it was originally €305 a week, but was increased to €350 from 24th March 2020), with additional weekly payments of €147 for a qualified adult, €36 for each qualified child under 12 years and €40 for each qualified child aged 12 or over.

The COVID-19 Enhanced Illness Benefit is provided for in Part 2 of the Health (Preservation and Protection and other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) Act 2020 ([No. 1 of 2020](#)) and in [Regulations](#) made under those provisions.

### **Article 18**

The benefit specified in Article 16 shall be granted throughout the contingency, except that the benefit may be limited to 26 weeks in each case of sickness, and need not be paid for the first three days of suspension of earnings.

There are no changes to the duration of payment since the last report in relation to standard Illness Benefit.

## **Part IV. Unemployment Benefit**

The COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) was introduced as a time-limited, emergency income support measure to address the public health crisis and meet the dramatic surge in unemployment as a consequence. This emergency payment, of €350 per week, was introduced to support employees and the self-employed of working age between 18 and up to 66 years old who had lost their job due to the pandemic. To qualify for PUP a person had to have been between the ages of 18 and 66 and in employment immediately before 13th March. No waiting days or qualifying period is required to qualify for the PUP. In addition since 19 March, as a temporary measure, no waiting days are required to be served on an ordinary unemployment benefit claim. Additional information is outlined in Appendix I.

### **Article 20**

Jobseeker's Benefit is a weekly payment to people who are out of work and covered by social insurance (PRSI). The Jobseekers Benefit week is based on a 7 day week. Sunday is treated the same as any other day in the week; as a day of employment or unemployment as appropriate.

The contingency is satisfied by a person who has experienced a substantial loss of employment and as a result is fully unemployed, or fully unemployed for at least 4 days in any 7 consecutive days. A person must also be under 66 years of age, capable of work, and be available for and genuinely seeking full-time employment.

## **Article 21**

Sub-paragraph (a) applies.

Since the last report a new social insurance benefit scheme for the self-employed who lose their self-employment was introduced. From November 2019 people who are self-employed and whose business has ceased are entitled to apply for Jobseekers Benefit Self Employed. Many of the key features of the existing jobseekers benefit scheme apply to the new scheme such as its duration and rate of payment. The class of people who are covered for Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Benefit Self Employed now includes class S.

The Annual Statistical Report for the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection details the numbers and classes of insured persons. The figures in relation to PRSI for 2018 are listed in Appendix II.

### **Classes of people who are covered for Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Benefit Self-Employed:**

- Persons in Classes A, H, P and S – total 2,510,452

### **Classes of people not covered for Jobseekers Benefit or Jobseekers Benefit Self-Employed:**

- People in classes B, C, D, E and J – total 113,316 (Class J includes an unknown number of employees who are over pension age)

**Total number of employees in 2018 = 2,625,768**

## **Percentage insured for Jobseeker's Benefit in 2018 = 96%**

The following Classes are not counted as employees:-

- Class K applies to Public Office holders, additional income of a self-employed person and other income such as rental, investment income, dividends and interest on deposits and savings;
- Class S is for self-employed persons;
- Class M applies to persons with no liability for a contribution;
- Voluntary contributors are persons who have ceased employment but are contributing to maintain entitlements to long-term benefits such as pensions.

## **Article 22**

Further detail on the changes in methodology used in calculating the reference wage figure is set out in the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report under Article 74 of the European Code of Social Security, in response II. The updated 2018 reference wage figure is provided in Appendix III.

## **Rate of Benefit**

There were no changes to the rate of Jobseekers Benefit in Budget 2020. The maximum rate of increase for a qualified adult is €134.70. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the rate for a qualified adult has been temporarily increased to €147 from €134.70 until 10 August 2020 as part of the Government's income support plans announced on 24 March 2020. There are two rates for a qualified child depending on age. The rate for a qualified child under 12 increased

from €34.00 to €36.00 per week while the rate for a qualified child 12 years and over increased from €37.00 to €40.00 per week.

The 2017 rate used in the comparison to the reference wage below includes the personal rate €193, the rate for a qualified adult €128.20 and the rate for a qualified child €29.80, so the weekly amount for two children is €59.60. The 2018 rate used in the comparison to the reference wage below includes the personal rate €198, the rate for a qualified adult €131.40, the rate for a qualified child €31.80, so the rate for 2 qualified children is €63.60. The rate for a qualified child was increased in 2019 to €34.00 for a qualified child under 12 years and €37.00 for a qualified child aged 12 and over. The rates for 2020 were €36.00 for a qualified child under 12 years and €40.00 for a qualified child aged 12 and over.

### **Article 66 Title II**

#### **Reference Wage / Jobseeker's Benefit (couple and 2 children)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Wage</b> €	<b>All'nce</b> *€	<b>Total</b> €	<b>Benefit</b> €	<b>All'nce</b> *€	<b>Total</b> €	<b>%</b>
<b>2017</b>	727	64.60	791.60	380.70	64.60	445.30	56
<b>2018</b>	756	64.60	820.60	393.00	64.60	457.60	56

\* The family allowances for a worker in this column include Child Benefit and the rate of Working family Payment appropriate to a family with this level of income. In 2017/2018 the level of earnings exceeded the threshold for the working Family Payment allowance and so this figure includes Child Benefit only, payable in 2017 and 2018 at €140 per

month per child for each of the first 2 children.  $\text{€}140 \times 2 \times 12 / 52 = \text{€}64.60$  (rounded to the nearest 10) per week.

### **Article 66 Title V**

#### **Reference Wage (single person) / Maximum weekly rate of Jobseeker's Benefit (single person)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Wage €</b>	<b>Benefit €</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>2017</b>	727	193.00	27
<b>2018</b>	756	198.00	26

Full details of rates are published on the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection's website: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/1221b0-jobseekers-benefit/>

### **Article 23**

#### **Conditions for receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit**

There has been a change in the contribution conditions required for receipt of Jobseekers Benefit since the last report as self-employed people now qualify for Jobseekers Benefit Self-Employed (see above). The contribution conditions are :-

A person must have paid at least 104 PRSI insurable employment contributions at Class A, H or P,

**or**

have paid at least 156 PRSI self-employment contributions at Class S.

**and**

must have 39 PRSI contributions paid from employment in the governing contribution year.

At least 13 of these contributions must be paid from employment in the governing contribution year, the two years before this, the last year or the current tax year.

The governing contribution year is the second last complete tax year before the year in which the claim is made. For example, for claims made in 2020, the governing contribution year is 2018.

**or**

26 PRSI contributions paid in the governing contribution year and 26 paid in the year immediately before this.

Sections 68B-68J inclusive of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 as amended relate to Jobseekers Benefit Self-Employed.

## **Part V. Old Age Benefit**

### **Article 26**

There are no changes since the last report.

### **Article 27**

Sub-paragraph (a) applies.

There are no changes to the classes of employees covered or the percentage insured since the last report.

The Annual Statistical Report for the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection details the numbers and classes of insured persons. The figures in relation to PRSI for 2018 are listed in Appendix II.

#### **Classes of employees covered for State Pension (Contributory)**

- Persons in Classes A, E and H– total 2,197,725

#### **Classes of employees not covered for State Pension (Contributory)**

- Persons in classes B, C, D, P and J – total 113,159

(Class J includes an unknown number of employees who are over pension age).

**Total number of employees in 2018 = 2,625,768**

## **Percentage insured for State Pension (Contributory) in 2018 = 84%**

The following Classes are not counted as employees:

- Class K applies to Public Office holders, additional income of a self-employed person and other income such as rental, investment income, dividends and interest on deposits and savings;
- Class S is for self-employed persons;
- Class M applies to persons with no liability for a contribution;
- Voluntary contributors are persons who have ceased employment but are contributing to maintain entitlements to long-term benefits such as pensions.

## **Article 28**

Further detail on the changes in methodology used in calculating the reference wage figure is set out in the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Report under Article 74 of the European Code of Social Security, in response II. The 2017 and 2018 reference wage figure are provided in Appendix III.

## **Rate of Benefit**

The 2017 rate used in the comparison to the reference wage below includes the personal rate of €238.30 and the qualified adult rate of €213.50, these were both increases in rates of payment from Budget 2017. The 2018 rate used in the comparison to the reference wage below includes the maximum personal rate of State Pension (Contributory) €243.30 per week and the maximum rate of qualified adult allowance €218.00 per week.

In 2019 the maximum personal rate of State Pension (Contributory) was €248.30 per week and the maximum rate of qualified adult allowance was €222.50 per week (increase for a Qualified Adult aged 66 and over). Both of these increases in rates of payment were set as part of Budget 2019 in October 2018.

A Christmas bonus, of a full weeks payment, was paid in 2019.

The Living Alone Allowance is not means tested and is a targeted payment. The risk of social isolation is clearly higher for those living alone than those who live with other people. Budget 2020 increased the Living Alone Allowance. From the week beginning 6 January 2020, the Living Alone Allowance was increased by €5, from €9 to €14 per week. It is not a payment in its own right, but rather it is a supplement paid to people aged 66 years or over who are in receipt of certain social welfare payments and who are living alone. It is also available to people who are under 66 years of age who are living alone and are in receipt of Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension, Incapacity Supplement or Blind Pension.

### **Article 66 Title III**

#### **Reference Wage / State Pension (Contributory)**

**(Couple – both aged between 66 and 80. No family allowance payable)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Wage</b> €	<b>Benefit</b> €	<b>%</b>
<b>2017</b>	727	451.80	62
<b>2018</b>	756	461.30	61

**Article 66 Title V**

**Reference Wage (single person) /**

**Maximum weekly rate of Pension (single person)**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Wage €</b>	<b>Benefit €</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>2017</b>	727	238.30	33
<b>2018</b>	756	243.30	32

Full details of rates are published on the Department of Social Protection's website:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/1af6ca-rates-of-payment-sw19/>

## Article 65 Title VI

### Comparison of Benefit Rates with Cost of Living and Average Wages

<b>Year</b>	<b>CPI (base 2016 =100)  (a)</b>	<b>Average earnings  €</b>	<b>Old Age Pension (couple + 2 children)  €</b>	<b>Old Age Benefit (couple with no children)  €</b>
May-2019	102.3(a)	771.63 (b)	544.8	470.8
May-2020	101.8(a)	801.83(e)	576.6(c)	496.6(c)
Percentage change	-0.5(d)	+3.9	+5.8	+5.5

- (a) <https://statbank.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=CPM02&PLanguage=0>
- (b) <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/elcq/earningsandlabourcostsq22019finalq32019preliminaryestimates/>
- (c) <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/6aec4d-current-rates-of-payment-for-social-welfare-payments-sw19/>
- (d) <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/cpi/consumerpriceindexmay2020/>
- (e) <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/elcq/earningsandlabourcostsq42018finalq12019preliminaryestimates/>

## **Additional Benefits**

Recipients of State Pension (Contributory) may also, depending on their circumstances, be eligible for secondary benefits such as the Living Alone Allowance (a €14 per week increase to their weekly payment), the Fuel Allowance (Fuel Allowance is paid between October and April (28 weeks) at a rate of €24.50 (rate increased by €2 on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020)<sup>2</sup> and the Household Benefits Package (€35 per month towards the claimant's gas/electricity costs, and the free television licence worth €160 per annum). There is an additional increase of €12.70 for people aged 66 and over living on certain offshore islands. Recipients are eligible for the Free Travel Pass, which entitles the bearer to free travel on public transport and certain private services in Ireland. Recipients are automatically paid an extra allowance of €10 per week when they reach 80 years of age. Where they do not own their own home and have rental costs, they may be entitled to Rent Supplement (the amount paid varies with the rent payable).

## **Article 29**

### **Conditions for receipt of State Pension (Contributory)**

The Interim Total Contributions Approach (TCA) was introduced in 2018. Interim TCA included provision for the HomeCaring Periods Scheme which fundamentally changed the entitlement of many who spent time out of the workforce caring for others. It, for the first time, acknowledged home caring periods prior to 1994. Interim TCA provides for up to 20 years of home caring periods to be considered. Those who have a 40 year record of paid and

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<sup>2</sup> In order to support vulnerable households during the COVID-19 emergency, the 2019/20 fuel season was extended by four weeks to 32 weeks for existing eligible customers on a once-off basis.

credited social insurance contributions, subject to a maximum of 20 years of credits / homecaring periods, qualify for a maximum contributory pension where they satisfy the other qualifying conditions for the scheme.

Work began on examining the social insurance records of over 90,000 pensioners in September 2018. Where these reviews resulted in an increase in the pensioner's rate of payment, the increase was backdated to 30 March 2018 or the pensioners 66th birthday, whichever was the later. As at the end of October 2019, with the project completed, 94,258 reviews have been finalised; of these, 53,092 (56%) are women and 41,166 (44%) are men. Of the 53,092 women reviewed 28,528 (54%) received an increase while the rest remain on their existing rate. Of the 41,166 men reviewed, 9,956 (24%) received an increase and the remainder continue to received their same rate of payment. No pensioner had their pension payment reduced as part of this review.

From April 2019, all new State (Contributory) Pension applications are assessed under all possible rate calculation methods, including the Interim TCA, with the most beneficial rate paid to the pensioner.

## **Part VI. Work Accident and Occupational Disease Benefit**

This Part of the Code has not been accepted by Ireland.

## **Part VII. Family Benefit**

### **Articles 40 to 41**

Child Benefit is payable to the parents or guardians of children under 16 years of age, or under 18 years of age if the child is in full-time education, Youthreach training or has a disability.

Child Benefit is not paid in respect of 18 year olds.

Child Benefit is payable at one and a half times the appropriate monthly rate for twins, and at double the appropriate monthly rate for triplets or other multiple births, provided at least three of the children remain qualified.

## Article 42

### Child Benefit

The Child Benefit rate remains at €140 per month<sup>3</sup> as set out in the following table.

Number of children	2020 monthly rate	2020 annual rate
1 child	€140	€1,680
2 children	€280	€3,360
3 children	€420	€5,040
4 children	€560	€6,720
5 children	€700	€8,400
6 children	€840	€10,080
7 children	€980	€11,760
8 children	€1,120	€13,440

### One-Parent Family Payment (OFP)

One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) is a payment for men and women under 66 who are bringing children up without the support of a partner. To get this payment a person must meet

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<sup>3</sup> Multiple births

If a person has twins, they get one and a half times the normal monthly rate for each child. For triplets and other multiple births, Child Benefit is paid at double the normal monthly rate for each child, provided at least three of the children remain qualified.

certain conditions and must satisfy a means test. The maximum age of the youngest child for receipt of One-Parent Family Payment is 7 years for all recipients, save the exemptions outlined below.

**Exceptions:**

- Where a person is in receipt of a Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) for any child in the family, One-Parent Family Payment may continue up to the more favourable of: the 16<sup>th</sup> birthday of the child in respect of whom DCA is in payment; or when the youngest child reaches the relevant qualifying age limit.
- Where a person is caring for an individual other than their own child and is in receipt of One-Parent Family Payment and a half-rate Carer's Allowance payment, One-Parent Family Payment may continue up to the 16<sup>th</sup> birthday of the youngest child once the recipient continues to qualify for OFP and Carer's Allowance.
- A person who is recently bereaved (having been married, cohabiting or in a civil partnership) and is thus parenting alone can claim One-Parent Family Payment beyond the normal age limit for the youngest child of 7 years. They can claim One-Parent Family Payment for up to two years from the date of death of the spouse/cohabitant/civil partner or until the youngest child reaches 18 years of age, whichever is earlier. This ensures that those recently bereaved with children approaching or over 7 years of age are supported.

- Lone parents who are in receipt of a Blind Pension can retain their entitlement to One-Parent Family Payment until their youngest child is 16 years of age subject to the conditions of the schemes.

### **Post One-Parent Family Payment Income Supports**

When One-Parent Family Payment entitlement ends, a person may qualify for other income support payments including the following:

- A person in employment of 19 hours or more per week (38 hours per fortnight), may apply for the Working Family Payment (WFP). The Working Family Payment was formerly known as Family Income Supplement (FIS). If already in receipt of WFP, the amount of this supplement may, in certain circumstances, be increased when One-Parent Family Payment ends. WFP recipients are also entitled to the Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD). The BTWFD allows recipients to retain the increase for the qualified child portion of their former One-Parent Family Payment, which equals €36.00 per week per child aged under 12 and €40.00 per child per week aged 12 and over (maximum of four children per claim), for two years, with full payment of the qualified child increase in the first year and 50% entitlement in the second year.
- Lone parents with a youngest child aged 7 to 13 years (inclusive) can transition to the Jobseeker's Transitional Payment which was introduced in 2013. This payment exempts such persons from having to be available for and

genuinely seeking full-time work, thereby acknowledging that these parents are caring for young children. They can work part-time, for example mornings only, if they wish and still receive a payment subject to means. They must continue to be a lone parent to receive this payment. Qualifying for this payment provides access to a one-to-one meeting with an activation case officer and the associated work activation supports. The BTWFD will allow recipients to retain the increase for their qualified child if they move off this scheme to employment or self-employment. It is payable for two years, as above.

- Lone parents whose youngest child is 14 or over can apply for either Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance. They must be unemployed, capable of work, and genuinely seeking full-time work. Qualifying for this payment provides access to a wide range of additional work activation supports. The BTWFD allows recipients to retain the increase for their qualified child if they move off this scheme to employment or self-employment and is payable for two years.

### **Enhanced Activation Supports**

All lone parents on a Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Transitional Payment gain enhanced access to activation supports.

Jobseeker's Transitional Payment recipients receive a one-to-one meeting with a case officer who assists them to produce a personal development plan and guides them towards

appropriate education, training and employment opportunities. While the person is on the Jobseeker's Transitional Payment, this support is available and is not limited to the 12-month engagement that applies for other jobseekers following their one-to-one meeting. Through the Jobseeker's Transitional Payment, lone parents with children aged between 7 and 13 years are provided with a very long transition period of seven years within which to engage with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection Intreo service.<sup>4</sup> The aim of this broader support is to improve the individual's employment prospects.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection Intreo service operates a range of employment support services that are designed to encourage and assist income support recipients of working age, including lone parents, to return to work. These services are provided through a network of locally based case officers who work with recipients to help identify appropriate training or development programmes that will enhance their skills. They work in close co-operation with other agencies and service providers including SOLAS (the Further Education and Training Authority in Ireland), the local education and training boards, other education and training providers, and the local community and voluntary sector.

Former One-Parent Family Payment recipients on a Jobseeker's Allowance payment i.e. those with a youngest child 14 years of age or older, are subject to the standard activation process which includes a group engagement with a case officer followed by appropriate supports.

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<sup>4</sup> Intreo is the integrated employment and income support service which was launched in October 2012.

## Budget 2020 changes to One-Parent Family Payment

- An increase in the income disregard for parents in receipt of the One-Parent Family Payment and the Jobseeker's Transitional Payment from €150 a week to €165 a week with effect from January 2020;
- A Christmas Bonus of 100% was paid in early December 2019;
- The qualified child payment, which is paid each week to families with children, increased from €34.00 to €36.00 per child per week for children under 12, and from €37.00 to €40.00 per child per week for children aged 12 and over.

## Working Family Payment Rates

The 2019 and 2020 weekly income thresholds for receipt of Working Family Payment are set out in the following table.

<b>No. of Children</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
1	521	531
2	622	632
3	723	733
4	834	834
5	960	960
6	1,076	1,076
7	1,212	1,212
8+	1,308	1,308

The rate of Working Family Payment payable is 60% of the net family income (gross pay minus tax, employee PRSI, superannuation, and Universal Social Charge) and the income limit that applies to the family circumstances. The minimum weekly Working Family Payment, payable to those who would otherwise qualify for a lesser rate, is €20.00.

### **Article 43**

There are no changes to report under this Article.

### **Child Supports 2018**

The following statistics relate to the range of child supports provided by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection in 2018:

Total amount of Child Benefit paid:	€2,097.96 million
Total amount of Working Family Payment paid:	€410.55 million
Back to School Clothing and Footwear expenditure:	€47.4 million
Total amount of above:	€2,555.91 million
Total number of children of all residents within qualifying age range:	1,202,925

The reference wage for 2018 is €756 per week or €39,312.00 per annum. Total expenditure of €2,555.91 million is approximately 5.4% of €39,312.00 x 1,202,925 (total number of children of all residents within the qualifying age range).

## **Article 45**

### **Suspension of Benefit**

There is no change to report in respect of this Article.

## **Part VIII. Maternity Benefit**

This Part of the Code has not been accepted by Ireland.

## **Part IX. Invalidity Benefit**

This Part of the Code has not been accepted by Ireland.

## **Part X. Survivor's Benefit**

### **Article 60**

There is no change to report in respect of this Article.

### **Article 61**

Sub-paragraph (b) applies.

The Annual Statistical Report for the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection details the numbers and classes of insured persons. The figures in relation to PRSI for 2018 are listed in Appendix II.

#### **Classes of employees and self-employed who are covered for Widow's/Widower's, or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension**

Persons in Classes A, B, C, D, E, H, S and Voluntary Contributions – total 2,567,370

**Population estimate 2018: 4,857,000**

**Estimate of persons in all classes: 2,988,218**

**Percentage insured for Widow's/Widower's, or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension = 86%**

## **Article 62**

### **Rates of Payment**

In 2020 the maximum weekly personal rate for Widow's/Widower's, or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension (WSCPCP) aged under 66 remained unchanged at €208.50. The maximum weekly personal rate for recipients aged 66 and under 80 is €248.30, which increases to €258.30 where the beneficiary is aged over 80. The rate for a qualified child under age 12 increased to €36.00, and for a child aged over 12 to €40.00 weekly.

The Christmas Bonus was paid in 2019 to WSCPCP recipients.

The 2017 rate used in the comparison to the reference wage below includes the personal rate of €198.50 (if under 66) and the qualified child rate of €29.80. The rate for Over 66 & Under 80 is €238.30 The 2018 rate used in the comparison to the reference wage below includes the personal rate of €203.50 (if under under 66) and the qualified child rate of €31.80.

### **Duration of Payment**

The pension remains payable while the person remains widowed or a surviving civil partner. If they re-marry or start to cohabit i.e. live with someone as a couple, it is no longer payable. A person may get increases for qualified children with their pension - these remain payable while the child is aged under 18 and they may then be continued until age 22 if the child is in full-time education.

#### Article 66 Title IV

#### Weekly rate of Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner (Contributory) Pension

/ Reference Wage (widow under 66 years of age and 2 children)

Period	Wage €	All'nce *€	Total €	Benefit €	All'nce *€	Total €	%
2017	727	64.60	791.60	258.10	64.60	322.70	41
2018	756	64.60	820.60	267.10	64.60	331.70	40

\* The family allowances for a worker in this column include Child Benefit and the rate of Working family Payment appropriate to a family with this level of income. In 2017/2018 the level of earnings exceeded the threshold for the working Family Payment allowance and so this figure includes Child Benefit only, payable in 2017 and 2018 at €140 per month per child for each of the first 2 children.  $\text{€}140 \times 2 \times 12 / 52 = \text{€}64.60$  (rounded to the nearest 10) per week

## Article 66 Title V

### Reference wage / Weekly rate of Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner

#### (Contributory) Pension (single person, male or female)

<b>Period</b>	<b>Wage</b>	<b>Benefit</b>	<b>%</b>
	€	€	
<b>2017</b>	727	198.50	27
<b>2018</b>	756	203.50	27

Full details of rates are published on the Department of Social Protection's website:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/6aec4d-current-rates-of-payment-for-social-welfare-payments-sw19/>

## Article 65 Title VI

### Comparison of Benefit Rates with Cost of Living and Average Wages

<b>Year</b>	<b>CPI (base 2016 =100)  (a)</b>	<b>Average earnings  €</b>	<b>Old Age Pension (couple + 2 children)  €</b>	<b>Old Age Benefit (couple with no children)  €</b>
May-2019	102.3(a)	771.63 (b)	544.8	470.8
May-2020	101.8(a)	801.83(e)	576.6(c)	496.6(c)
Percentage change	-0.5(d)	+3.9	+5.8	+5.5

- (a) <https://statbank.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=CPM02&PLanguage=0>
- (b) <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/elcq/earningsandlabourcostsq22019finalq32019preliminaryestimates/>
- (c) <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/6aec4d-current-rates-of-payment-for-social-welfare-payments-sw19/>
- (d) <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/cpi/consumerpriceindexmay2020/>
- (e) <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/elcq/earningsandlabourcostsq42018finalq12019preliminaryestimates/>

## **Article 63**

### **Social Insurance Contributions (PRSI)**

There are no changes to the contribution conditions since the 46<sup>th</sup> report.

## Parts XII – XIII. Equality and Common Provisions

### Article 68

Provisions for the suspension of benefits are set out in the individual Parts of the Report.

### Article 69

There are no changes since the last report

### Article 70

The following gives expenditure for 2018 on each of the schemes dealt with in this report.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Expenditure for 2017</b>	<b>Expenditure for 2018</b>
	<b>€000</b>	<b>€000</b>
Illness Benefit	599,369	623,293
Jobseeker's Benefit	340,458	339,109
State Pension (Contributory)	4,915,853	5,217,045
Child Benefit*	2,086,390	2,097,968
Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension	1,466,597	1,510,450
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,408,667</b>	<b>9,787,865</b>

\* Child Benefit Expenditure only. Family Benefits are funded by the Exchequer and not from the Social Insurance Fund.

Total expenditure on all social welfare schemes in 2018 amounted to €20,310.9 million, of which €10,820.3 million was met from taxation and €9,490.6 million from the Social Insurance Fund.

### **Article 71**

There are no changes since the last report.

### **Article 73**

There are no changes since the last report. The relevant legislation does not contain any distinctions on the grounds of nationality for beneficiaries.

### **Responses to the matters raised in the draft Resolution of the Committee of Ministers**

Responses to the matters raised in the draft Resolution of the Committee of Ministers on the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Report submitted by the Government of Ireland are in Appendix I.

## Appendix I

**DRAFT**

**Resolution CM/ResCSS(2020)...**  
**on the application of the European Code of Social Security**  
**by Ireland**  
**(Period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on .... 2020  
at the ...th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers,

In the exercise of the functions conferred upon it by Article 75 of the European Code of Social Security (hereinafter referred to as the “Code”), and with a view to supervising the application of this instrument by the Contracting Parties;

Whereas the Code, opened for signature on 16 April 1964, entered into force on 17 March 1968 and since 17 February 1972 has been binding on Ireland, which ratified it on 16 February 1971;

Whereas, when ratifying the Code, the Government of Ireland stated that it accepted, in addition to the parts which must be applied by every Contracting Party (Parts I, XI, XII, XIII and XIV), the following parts of the Code:

– Part III on “sickness benefit”,

- Part IV on “unemployment benefit”,
- Part V on “old-age benefit”,
- Part VII on “family benefit”,
- Part X on “survivors’ benefit”;

Whereas, in pursuance of paragraph 1 of Article 74 of the Code, the Government of Ireland submitted its 46th annual report on the application of the Code, for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019;

Whereas, in accordance with paragraph 4 of Article 74, that report was examined by the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, at its 90th meeting in November and December 2019;

Whereas, when Contracting Parties are invited to submit annual reports under the Code and its Protocol, if the country has ratified one or more of ILO Convention N°s 102, 121, 128 or 130, copies of the relevant reports may be used in order to report on the Code provided that, where necessary, they are completed by any other information requested in the form;

Whereas, at the 133th meeting of the Governmental Committee of the European Social Charter and the European Code of Social Security (9-13 May 2016), the ILO representative presented the ILO’s approach to assisting governments in fulfilling their reporting obligations by bringing together information on social security provisions in national reports under the Code and relevant ILO treaties, including the above-mentioned ILO Conventions, into one “consolidated report” to be updated by the government, with a view to ensuring consistency;

Recalls that the ILO Conclusions on application of the Code and its Protocol for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 were transmitted to the government representatives of Contracting Parties in view of adoption of the draft resolutions on application of the Code and its Protocol at the 141<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Governmental Committee, 5-9 October 2020;

Recalls that information which the Government is requested to provide in its next report (due by 31 July 2020) for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020, will be examined by the ILO Committee of Experts at its next meeting in November/December 2020;

Notes:

I. concerning Part III (Sickness benefit), Article 18 of the Code, Waiting period, in its previous Resolution CM/ResCSS(2019)9, the Committee of Ministers noted that the number of waiting days before illness benefits become payable had been increased from three to six days in 2014 under the EU–IMF fiscal consolidation programme and that this had been done in violation of Article 18 of the Code, which authorises such a waiting period only for the first three days of suspension of earnings. The Committee of Ministers further noted that 75 per cent of the employers, members of the Irish Business and Employers’ Confederation had an occupational sick pay scheme in place, which provided sick pay during the waiting days and requested the Government to satisfy itself that these sick pay arrangements cover not less than 50 per cent of all employees, in accordance with Article 15(a) of the Code. In its reply, the Government indicates that it is not possible to extrapolate this figure in order to determine the number of employees covered by such contractual sick pay arrangements, as establishing occupational sick pay schemes is not a legislative requirement in Ireland and accurate data on the number of employees covered by such arrangements is not available at the time the report

was prepared. The Committee of Ministers notes that employees in Ireland have no right under employment law to be paid for an initial period while on sick leave. Consequently, it is at the discretion of the employer to decide their own policy on sick pay and sick leave subject to the employee's contract or terms of employment. The Committee of Ministers observes that as the Code requires the payment of sickness benefits only during periods of suspension of earnings, the Government could consider introducing a statutory sick pay scheme under its employment law, without additional expenses for the social security scheme. Recalling that Article 18 of the Code allows a waiting period only for the first three days of sickness, the Committee of Ministers therefore reiterates its request as indicated below;

II. Part III (Sickness benefit), Article 17, and Part IV (Unemployment benefit), Article 23 of the Code, Length of the qualifying period, in its previous Resolution CM/ResCSS(2019)9, the Committee of Ministers noted that a person must have at least 260 weeks (five years) of pay related social insurance (PRSI) contributions paid before becoming eligible to illness benefit for the maximum period of two years (624 payment days) and to jobseeker's benefit for the maximum period of nine months (234 payment days). If a person has between 104 and 259 weeks of paid PRSI contributions, illness benefit is payable for one year (312 payment days) and jobseeker's benefit for six months (156 payment days). The Committee of Ministers recalled that a qualifying period of at least 104 weeks or two years of PRSI contributions before becoming eligible to illness benefits or jobseeker's benefits is no longer accepted by the Code which authorises only "such a qualifying period as may be considered necessary to preclude abuse". As pointed out in its previous Resolution, following the above logic of linking the duration of benefit to the minimum qualifying period of PRSI contributions, it would suffice to entitle a person with 26 or 52 weeks of paid PRSI contributions to six months (26 calendar weeks) of sickness benefit or three months (13

calendar weeks) of jobseeker's benefit in order to bring the Irish legislation in this respect not only into conformity with the Code, but also into compliance with the practice in other European countries. The Committee of Ministers therefore requested the Government to examine the feasibility of introducing such parametric modifications into the national social welfare scheme or other modifications which would ensure conformity with Articles 17 and 23 of the Code.

In its reply, the Government underlines that despite the positive economic direction in which Ireland has moved in recent years, Irish national debt, arising from the recent economic downturn remains significant and prudence in relation to public spending is required. It further indicates that the overall spending on social welfare has increased from €19.8 billion in 2016 to (circa) €20.3 billion in 2018. The Government points out that it needs to ensure adequate and sustainable social insurance pensions and benefits for a growing and ageing population. It has also recently announced the introduction of a new PRSI contribution based support for the self-employed, who are unemployed, which will become available towards the end of 2019. The Committee of Ministers also takes note of the Government's statement that it would be difficult to envisage how the modifications, as outlined, would be sustainable in current circumstances and in any event could only be considered in a budgetary context and in the context of overall improvements. It welcomes the intention of the Government to request technical assistance from the ILO in this respect, following the proposal put forward in its previous request and encourages the Irish Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection to make the necessary arrangements with the International Labour Office;

III. concerning Part XIII (Miscellaneous provisions), Article 74(1) of the Code, Reporting on the Code, the Committee of Ministers thanks the Government for supplying an update of the consolidated report;

Finds that law and practice in Ireland continue to give full effect to Parts V, VII and X of the Code, and that they also ensure the application of Parts III and IV, subject to the revision of the length of the qualifying period for entitlement to sickness and unemployment benefits and subject to shortening the waiting period for sickness benefit;

Decides to invite the Government of Ireland:

**I. concerning Part III (Sickness benefit), Article 18 of the Code, Waiting period, to indicate in its next report the measures taken or contemplated in order to bring its legislation on a six-day waiting period of sick leave, during which there is no entitlement to earnings or illness benefits, into compliance with Article 18 of the Code;**

### **Response**

The Draft Resolution invited the Government examine measures taken or contemplated relating to the waiting period for sick leave. The payment of Illness Benefit is funded by the Social Insurance Fund (SIF) through the payment of Pay Related Social Insurance contributions by workers and employers and, in the event of a shortfall between contributions received and benefits paid, the Exchequer. Any increase in expenditure on Illness Benefit would impact the position of the SIF. An increase in expenditure would be a significant burden on the SIF especially during the current crises.

Many employers do have occupational sick pay arrangements in place. According to the Central Statistics Office Working Conditions Quarterly National Household Survey Q1 2008, 64% of employees had access to paid sick leave.

Some preliminary work has been carried out in order to progress issues raised in the Draft Resolution;

- The impact of a reduction of the waiting period from six to three days was examined. The cost was estimated at €32.6 million per year.
- The introduction of a statutory sick pay scheme from the fourth day of sick leave was examined.

The introduction of a statutory sick pay scheme (SSP) in Ireland has been examined several times. It is recognised that a SSP could save the State money and would encourage employers to engage more actively in managing sickness in the workplace. Ideally SSP should be introduced in conjunction with a focus on employers actively engaging with employees who are on sick leave to encourage their return to work as soon as they are fit to do so. However, there are many policy considerations to take into account and the prevailing economic climate is a difficult one in which to introduce changes which would place additional burdens on businesses.

As part of the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, an enhanced Illness Benefit payment, of €350 per week, with no waiting period was introduced for those who contracted the illness or who were a probable source of infection. The possibility of reducing the waiting period for standard Illness Benefit must be viewed in the context of

increased budgetary constraints due to an unprecedented draw on unemployment and business supports due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government published a Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 in January 2020. On foot of the commitment in the Roadmap, the Ministry of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is currently reviewing illness and disability payments. The issue of changes to illness benefit will also be considered in that context.

**II. concerning Part III (Sickness benefit), Article 17, and Part IV (Unemployment benefit), Article 23 of the Code, Length of the qualifying period, to examine the feasibility of introducing parametric modifications to the national social welfare scheme or to take any other measures needed to ensure conformity with Articles 17 and 23 of the Code while preserving the financial sustainability of the national social welfare scheme.**

## **Response**

The Draft Resolution invited the Government examine the feasibility of introducing changes to the social welfare system guaranteeing access to the minimum duration of benefit by completing the minimum qualifying period, in particular providing access to Illness Benefit after contributing for a minimum of one year. The table below sets out the current position in Ireland and the suggestions by the COE/ILO.

<b>Number of contributions</b>	<b>Illness Benefit Paid</b>
260 or more	2 years
105 – 259	1 year
52 - 104	No entitlement
<i>Proposed by COE/ILO</i>	
<i>52-104</i>	<i>6 months</i>

As part of the Government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, an enhanced Illness Benefit payment with a single contribution was introduced for those who contracted the illness or who were a probable source of infection. This was a public health measure. To provide for Illness Benefit to be paid based on a reduced level of contributions would have a cost which must be considered in the current context of increased budgetary constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although, planned work on the feasibility of changing the qualifying conditions in respect of Illness Benefit has not yet been carried out there will be an opportunity to discuss these at our upcoming meeting.

A new social insurance benefit scheme for self-employed jobseekers was introduced from 1 November 2019. The new scheme supports those who lose their self-employment and are covered by social insurance. Many of the features of the existing Jobseeker’s Benefit available to employees apply to the new scheme. These include:

- The rate of payment is the same as that paid to employees receiving Jobseeker's Benefit.
- Payments, including increases for qualified adults and children are also made in line with that in place for the existing Jobseeker's Benefit.
- The duration for the new scheme is for 6 or 9 months depending on the number of PRSI contributions paid by the self-employed person. This is also in line with the existing scheme of Jobseeker's Benefit for employees

In response to the global emergency caused by Covid-19, Ireland put in place emergency measures aimed at protecting public health. It was recognised that there would be significant and unprecedented economic effects in terms of job losses and temporary layoffs which would impact on the incomes of a significant proportion of the work force.

The COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) was introduced as a time-limited, emergency income support measure to address the public health crisis and meet the dramatic surge in unemployment as a consequence. This emergency payment, of €350 per week, was introduced to support employees and the self-employed of working age between 18 and up to 66 years old who had lost their job due to the pandemic. To qualify for PUP a person had to have been between the ages of 18 and 66 and in employment immediately before 13th March. No waiting days or qualifying period is required to qualify for the PUP. In addition since 19 March, as a temporary measure, no waiting days are required to be served on an ordinary unemployment benefit claim.

In the administration of the Jobseeker's Benefit schemes the concept of continuity in a claim and the notion of 'linked claims' is a key component of how this scheme operates in practice.

Where a person makes a repeat claim before exhausting their current entitlement, within 26 weeks from the end of a previous claim, both claims may be linked and the social insurance contribution conditions are considered satisfied. Where a person exhausts his or her entitlement to either benefit, he or she must only have 13 additional contributions after the last day of payment in order to re-qualify for that benefit again. It affected only 52 people in 2019. It should also be noted that these 52 people may have an entitlement to jobseeker's benefit at a later stage. The qualifying conditions for Jobseeker's Benefit are appropriate to Ireland's circumstances and contribute to effective social protection against these risks. The period served by those in receipt of the PUP will count towards the qualifying period for unemployment benefit

Any further changes to these contributory based schemes would have to be considered in a budgetary context and in the context of the overall Irish welfare system and the prevailing economic conditions.

## Conclusion

We wish to thank the ILO/COE again for their positive engagement since our last meeting and look forward to meeting again as soon as practicable.

## Appendix II

### Number of contributors insured at each class of PRSI, 2018

PRSI Class	A	B	C	D	E	H	J	K	M	P	S	Voluntary Contributors
State Pension (Contributory)	X				X	X					X	X
Widows', Widowers' and Surviving Civil Partners' Contributory Pension	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X
Adoptive Benefit	X				X	X					X	
Health and Safety Benefit	X				X	X						
Jobseeker's Benefit	X					X				X <sup>[1]</sup>		
Maternity Benefit	X				X	X					X	
Paternity Benefit	X				X	X					X	
Treatment Benefit	X					X					X	
Carer's Benefit	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Illness Benefit	X				X	X				X <sup>[1]</sup>		
Invalidity Pension	X				X	X					X	
Occupational Injuries Benefit	X	X <sup>[1]</sup>		X			X		X <sup>[1]</sup>	X		
Guardian's Payment (Contributory)	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X
Death Grant	X				X	X						X
ALL BENEFITS	X											
<b>Number of Contributors Insured</b>	<b>2,189,634</b>	<b>16,756</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>39,674</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>7,934</b>	<b>56,460</b>	<b>28,117</b>	<b>346,271</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>312,884</b>	<b>62</b>

## Appendix III

### Reference wage data for years 2017 and 2018

Analysis of reference wage for males in NACE Code Classification Index Sector C in firms with at least 10 employees in the skilled and unskilled occupation categories.

#### ISCO Classification

#### DSP Reference Wage from EAADS using ISCO occupation classification

ISCO	Weekly Earnings	
	Mean	
	2017	2018
Skilled (ISCO 7)	806	848
Unskilled (ISCO 9)	727	756

ISCO	Monthly Earnings	
	Mean	
	2017	2018
Skilled (ISCO 7)	3,494	3,672
Unskilled (ISCO 9)	3,151	3,277

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**END.**