

The two main social welfare payments for carers are Carer's Allowance which is means tested and Carer's Benefit which is based on PRSI contributions. There is also Domiciliary Care Allowance which may be paid in respect of a child with a disability. Recipients of these payments may be eligible for an annual Respite Care Grant. Payments are made by the Department of Social and Family Affairs unless otherwise indicated.

Carer's Allowance

This is a long-term means tested payment for those aged 18 or over who are caring on a full-time basis for someone who requires full-time care and attention and will require it for at least 12 months. If the person being cared for is under 16 a full rate Domiciliary Care Allowance must be in payment in order to qualify for Carer's Allowance. Application forms (CA 1) are available from your local Social Welfare Office or from the Carer's Allowance Section of the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Maximum rates	Caring for one	Caring for two or more	Child Dependant
Aged under 66	€129-60	€194-40	€16-80
Aged over 66	€147-80	€221-70	€16-80

If you qualify for the Carer's Allowance, you are no longer eligible to be a qualified adult on your spouse or partner's social welfare payment. If you have a social welfare payment in your own right, you may get a Carer's Allowance instead of your existing payment provided you satisfy the conditions. You cannot normally get two social welfare payments at the same time. Recipients of Carer's Allowance may be eligible in their own right for Free Travel and for the Household Benefits Package which includes Free Electricity/Natural Gas Allowance, Free TV Licence and Free Telephone Rental Allowance.

Carer's Benefit

This is a short-term payment paid for up to 15 months to those who give up employment (of 34 hours per fortnight minimum) to care on a full-time basis for someone who requires full-time care and attention. You must have sufficient PRSI contributions to qualify. Additional payments are made for child dependants or if you are looking after more than one person. Application forms (CARB 1) available from your Social Welfare Office or from the Carer's Benefit Section.

Maximum rates	Caring for one	Caring for two or more	Child Dependant
	€139-70	€209-60	€16-80

Domiciliary Care Allowance

This is a monthly means tested Health Board payment (€188.90 maximum) for carers of children under age 16 with severe disabilities. Only the child's means are assessed. A reduced payment in respect of time spent at home (e.g. holidays) is paid for children who normally live in special schools or institutions.

Respite Care Grant

This is an annual payment of €735 (€1,470 if caring for two or more) made in June by the Department of Social and Family Affairs to carers receiving Carer's Allowance/Benefit or Constant Attendance Allowance. It is paid by the Health Board to those getting Domiciliary Care Allowance and no other carer's payment.

SUPPORTS FOR CARERS

Carer's Leave

Employees, after one year's service, may take unpaid leave (65 weeks maximum) to provide full-time care for someone who needs it. PRSI contribution credits are available and Carer's Benefit may be payable. You must apply to the Department of Social and Family Affairs on the Carer's Benefit application form for a decision that the person requires full time care. You must give this decision to your employer and you must also give your employer at least 6 weeks notice in writing of your intention to take Carer's Leave. Further information is available from the Employment Rights Information Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Allowance for Employing a Carer for an Incapacitated Person

This tax allowance of up to €30,000 at your highest tax rate is available where a person is employed to care for a person with a disability including a child. One or more family members of the person being cared for can claim the allowance.

Home Carer's Tax Credit

A tax credit of €770 is available for married couples (taxed jointly) where one spouse works in the home caring for a dependant child, a person over 65 or a permanently incapacitated person. Income of the carer must not exceed €5,080. Reduced tax credit is available where income is between €5,080 and €6,620.

Homemaker's Scheme

If you give up work to care full-time for a child under 12 or an incapacitated child or adult you may be able to have these years disregarded when the yearly average number of PRSI contributions for Old Age (Contributory) Pension is being calculated.

When caring ends

If the person you are caring for dies, Carer's Allowance/Benefit continues to be paid for six weeks after the death where you are not the spouse or partner. Where the carer is the spouse or partner, the Carer's Allowance/Benefit ceases and the married rate of the deceased's pension is paid for the six weeks. If the spouse/partner being cared for was not getting a social welfare payment Carer's Allowance/Benefit continues to be paid for the six weeks. A Bereavement Grant may also be payable if the PRSI conditions are met.

Contacts and Further Information

Carer's Allowance Section / also Carer's Benefit Section,

Social Welfare Services Office,
Government Buildings, Ballinalee Rd,
Longford.

Tel: (043) 40000 or (01) 704 3000

Employment Rights Information Unit,

Department of Enterprise, Trade and
Employment, Davitt House,
65a Adelaide Rd, Dublin 2.

LoCall 1890 201 615

Carers Association

Metropole Centre, James St,
Kilkenny.

Tel: (056) 21424,

Freephone 1800 240 724

Fax: (056) 53531

Email: ceo@carersireland.com

Care Alliance Ireland

30/31 Lr Camden St, Dublin 2.

Tel: (01) 475 6989

Fax: (01) 475 6011

Email: cai@ageact.ie

Caring For Carers Ireland

Abbey Arcade, Abbey St, Co. Clare

Tel: (065) 6866515

Fax: (065) 6867710

Email: caringforcarers@eircom.net

Citizens Information Centres (CIC)

For further information on rights
and entitlements, contact your
local Citizens Information Centre
- listed in the Golden Pages