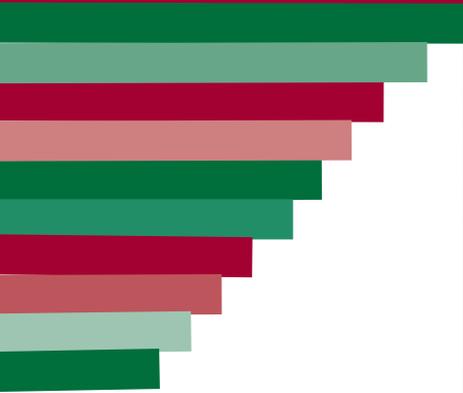




Irish Haemophilia Society



A Guide to Benefits & Allowances for Adults with Haemophilia

INTRODUCTION

We have recently dealt with a relatively large number of queries from adults with haemophilia, in relation to benefits and allowances, and therefore felt the need to produce our own booklets on these subjects. This booklet contains useful information and a brief overview of some of the benefits and allowances that are available to adults with haemophilia, which we hope you will find useful.

There are two main types of cash payments for people with disabilities: Social Insurance Payments, based on Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions, and Means Tested Payments, for those whose income is below a certain level. You may be eligible for a means tested Supplementary Welfare Allowance payment if you do not qualify for, or are awaiting a decision on, another Social Welfare payment. Don't forget if you have any queries you can contact Anne Duffy in our office on 01 6579900.



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LONG TERM ILLNESS SCHEME

- People with haemophilia can get prescribed drugs, medicines, together with medical and surgical appliances for the treatment of haemophilia **free of charge**.
- This is not means tested and is separate from the Medical and the GP Card Schemes.
- You will get a long term illness book which lists the drugs and medicines which will be provided free of charge through your community pharmacist. Other drugs and medicines not related to the specified condition must be paid for in the normal way.
- If your doctor or occupational therapist prescribes a **medical or surgical appliance**, it will be supplied to you from your Local Health Office.
- You can get an application form from your family doctor (GP) or Local Health Officer. Send the completed application form directly to your **Local Health Office**.



DISABILITY ALLOWANCE

This is a long term means tested weekly payment made to people with a disability. If you qualify for Disability Allowance you may also get **extra** social welfare benefits with your payment and other **supplementary welfare payments**. If you go into hospital or into residential care you will continue to get your payment, as long as you meet the qualifying conditions.

To qualify for Disability Allowance you must:

- Have an injury, disease or a physical or mental disability that has continued or may be expected to continue for at least one year.
- As a result of this disability be **substantially restricted** in undertaking work that would otherwise be suitable for a person of your age, experience and qualifications.
- Be aged between 16 and 65.
- Satisfy a Means Test **and**
- Satisfy the Habitual Residence condition.

Residential Care

If you are receiving Disability Allowance and go into hospital or residential care you will continue to get your payment as long as you meet the qualifying conditions.

Means Test

Disability Allowance is a means tested payment. To get the allowance your total means must be below a certain amount. The main items that count as means are:

- Cash income that you or your spouse may have.
- Capital, for example, the value of savings, investments, shares, any property you may have (other than your own home). However, **the first €50,000 of any capital you have is not taken into account.**
- Income from the sale of your home. The proceeds of the sale of the house **up to €190,460.71** may not be taken into account when assessing your means if you sell your home and move to more suitable accommodation **or**
- Move in with someone who is caring for you who receives a Carer's payment **or**
- Move to sheltered or special housing in the voluntary, co-operative, statutory or private sectors **or**
- Move into a Private Nursing Home that is registered under the Health (Nursing Homes) Act 1990 **or**
- If you are living in premises, part of which is a business and part of

which is used for accommodation, only the proceeds that relate to the part of the premises that has been used for accommodation are not taken into account.

- **Income derived from the Hepatitis C Compensation Tribunal is not included for means testing, however, you will need a letter from your legal firm to confirm where your money has come from.**

Income from work

You can do rehabilitative work and earn up to €120 per week without your payment being affected. You must get permission from the Department of Social and Family Affairs before you start work. Fifty percent of your earnings between €120 and €350 will **not** be taken into account. Any earnings over €350 is fully assessed as income in the means test.

Income from spouse's or partner's work

If your spouse or partner works it can affect your Disability Allowance. Your spouse's or partner's weekly earnings are assessed as follows:

- Weekly earnings are gross earnings less PRSI, superannuation and union dues.
- €20 per day (up to a maximum of €60) is deducted from your spouse's/partner's average weekly earnings after which 60% of the balance is assessed as weekly means. Then this weekly means is deducted from the combined total of your personal rate of Disability Allowance and the maximum increase for a Qualified Adult.
- If you were receiving Disability Allowance before 26 September 2007 and you are still in payment on the 26 September 2010, your spouse's or partner's earnings will be assessed under the new means assessment to find out if you are better off. If a greater amount of Disability Allowance is calculated on the previous assessment then you will continue to be assessed using the previous method of calculating means from employment.
- If your spouse's or partner's means have changed, for any reason since the 26 September 2007, you cannot apply the previous method of calculating means from employment.

Payments for dependants

If you are married or living with someone as husband and wife, you may get an increase in your payment for them as your adult dependant. You may also get an increase in your payment for dependant children. If you have children living with you and you are single, widowed or separated, you may get an increase in your payment for the person who is caring for your child, provided the person is aged 16 or over, living with and being supported by you.

Medical Examination

When you apply for Disability Allowance you can be called for a medical exam. If you are called and are unable to attend, or if you need help or information about your medical, you should contact the Medical Review and Assessment Section.

If you do not attend your medical exam you may not get your Disability Allowance.

How to apply

You can get an application form from the Disability Allowance Section or in your Social Welfare Local Office or from the website www.welfare.ie

Where to apply

Disability Allowance Section

Department of Social and Family Affairs
Social Welfare Services Office
Government Buildings
Ballinalee Road, Longford
Tel: 043 3345211 or 01 7043000
Lo-call: 1890 927770
Website: www.welfare.ie



INVALIDITY PENSION

This is a weekly payment for people who cannot work because of a long term illness or disability who are covered by social insurance. Normally, you must be getting Illness Benefit for at least twelve months before you claim Invalidity Pension.

At age 65, the rate of payment increases to the same rate as State Pension (Transition). At age 66, you will transfer to the State Pension. Invalidity Pension is taxable. You are entitled to a Free Travel Pass **and** a Companion Free Travel Pass, if you are medically assessed as requiring same, in addition to, extra social welfare benefits like the Household Benefits Package.

To get Invalidity Pension you must have at least:

- 260 (5 years) paid contributions since entering social insurance.
- 48 contributions paid or credited in the last complete tax year before your claim.
- The last complete tax year is, the year before your claim. For example, if you claim Invalidity Pension in 2010, the last completed tax year is 2009.

Medical criteria

A doctor employed by the Department of Social and Family Affairs will decide if you are medically unfit for work and qualify on medical grounds for Invalidity Pension.

To qualify you must:

- Have been incapable of work for at least 12 months and be likely to be incapable of work for at least another 12 months (you will probably have been getting Illness Benefit or Disability Allowance during that time) **or**
- Be permanently unable to work (in certain cases of very serious illness or disability, you can transfer directly from another social welfare payment or from your job to Invalidity Pension) **or**
- Be over the age of 60 **and** have a serious illness **or** incapacity.

Invalidity Pension and work

- You may be allowed to do rehabilitative work (up to a maximum 20 hours per week) and keep your Invalidity Pension.
- You must get written approval from the Department of Social and Family Affairs before you start work. The Department will decide if the work is rehabilitative.

How to apply

Fill in an Invalidity Pension application form which is available from your Local Social Welfare Office **and** on the website. You can get help to fill in your form from your local Citizens Information Centre or local Social Welfare Office.

Where to apply

Invalidity Pension Section

Social Welfare Services Office

Government Buildings

Ballinalee Road

Longford

Tel: (043) 334 5211 or (01) 704 3000

Lo-call: 1890 92 77 70



ILLNESS BENEFIT

- You may obtain Illness Benefit if you cannot work because you are sick or ill.
- You must be under 66 years of age and be covered by social insurance (PRSI).
- If you are not entitled to sick pay from work you may get Illness Benefit if you have enough social insurance (PRSI) contributions.
- If you get sick pay from work, your employer will probably require you to sign over any Illness Benefit payment from the Department of Social and Family Affairs to the employer, for as long as you get sick pay from work. When your sick pay ends, your employer should stop getting your Illness Benefit.
- You must apply for Illness Benefit within 7 days of becoming ill. No payment is made for the first three days of illness.

To obtain Illness Benefit you must have:

- At least 104 weeks PRSI paid since you first started work **and**
 - Have 39 weeks PRSI paid or credited in the relevant tax year (a minimum of 13 weeks must be paid contributions*) **or**
 - Have 26 weeks PRSI paid both in the relevant tax year and in the tax year immediately before that.
- *If you do not have 13 paid contributions in the relevant tax year, the following years can be used to meet this condition:
- The 2 tax years before the relevant tax year.
 - The last complete tax year **or**
 - The current tax year.

The Relevant Tax Year is the second last complete tax year before the year in which your claim is made. So, for claims made in 2010, the Relevant Tax Year is 2008.

Length of time Illness Benefit is paid:

- If you have 260 weeks PRSI paid since you first began work, you may be entitled to Illness Benefit for as long as you are unfit for work and you are under 66.
- **Since January 2009**, if you have 260 or more PRSI contributions you can get Illness Benefit for a maximum of 2 years. This change will not affect people getting the benefit before this date.
- If you have between 104 and 259 weeks PRSI contributions paid, you may be entitled to Illness Benefit for up to 52 weeks.
- At the end of this period, an extra 13 PRSI contributions must be paid (or a lesser number if it brings the total PRSI contributions paid up to 260) in order to requalify.

Transferring from Jobseeker's Allowance or Invalidity Pension to Illness Benefit

- If you were getting Jobseeker's Allowance or Invalidity Pension immediately before claiming Illness Benefit, you do not need to have 13 paid contributions.
- However, if you do not have the required 13 paid PRSI contributions in the Relevant Tax Year you will only qualify for a reduced rate of payment.

Jobseeker's Allowance and Illness Benefit

- If you are getting long term full rate Jobseeker's Allowance (15 months) and become ill, you can get the maximum rate of Illness Benefit.
- You must have at least 260 PRSI contributions paid at any time and at least 39 credited in the Relevant Tax Year. You do **not** need to have 13 PRSI contributions recently paid. In this case, you can get Illness Benefit for as long as you are unfit for work and under 66 years of age.
- If you are getting long-term Jobseeker's Allowance (15 months) and have at least 104 PRSI paid contributions since you first started work and at least 39 credited in the Relevant Tax Year **or** you don't need to have 13 PRSI contributions recently paid to qualify for Illness Benefit. You may not qualify for the maximum rate of benefit. The maximum period of time you can claim for is 52 weeks.

Transferring from Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance

If you transferred from Illness Benefit to Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance and then back to Illness Benefit, you will get Illness Benefit at a rate not lower than that you had in payment.

Illness Benefit and Tax

- Illness Benefit is taxable but it will be paid directly to you without deduction of income tax.
- If you are employed, your employer will take your Illness Benefit into account for PAYE purposes.
- If you are unemployed, the Revenue Commissioners will take account of the amount of Illness Benefit paid to you (where relevant), when adjusting your tax credits or reviewing the tax affairs of your spouse.
- You may be able to do part time rehabilitative work (up to a maximum of 20 hours a week) and keep your Illness Benefit. You must get written approval from the Department of Social and Family Affairs.



How to apply

- Apply for Illness Benefit within 7 days of becoming ill. A delay of more than 7 days may cause you to lose some of your payment. If there is a good reason for a delay in applying, your payment may be backdated.
- The application form is available from your family doctor (GP) or hospital doctor. It is not available online.
- You must send in a medical certificate (known as MC 2) each week for as long as you are ill, unless you are told otherwise.
- You must get a final medical certificate from your doctor before you go back to work.

Any questions you have about Illness Benefit should be made directly to your Social Welfare Local Office or to Illness Benefit enquiries at (01) 679 7777.

Where to apply Illness Benefit

Department of Social and Family Affairs
P.O. Box 1650
Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 679 7777

Website: www.welfare.ie

JOBSEEKER'S BENEFIT

How to qualify

- You must be unemployed for at least 3 days in 6.
- You must be under the age of 66.
- You must be capable of work.
- You must be available for **and** genuinely seeking work. If you have left work voluntarily, for example, if you have chosen early retirement, you may not get this benefit for 9 weeks after leaving work. After that, you have to prove that you are available for and genuinely seeking work.
- If you are aged **under 55 and** you have received a redundancy payment of more than €50,000, you may **not** get this benefit for 9 weeks. You can do a certain amount of work **and** remain entitled to some Jobseeker's Benefit.
- You should check with the Department of Social and Family Affairs before taking up work to see exactly what the effect will be. As a general rule, this benefit is payable for 390 days (65 weeks).
- However, if you are aged **between 65 and 66** when this benefit would normally end, you may continue to receive it until the age of 66, provided you meet the PRSI requirements. Alternatively, at 65, you **may** be eligible for the State Pension (Transition).



JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE

How to qualify

- You must be unemployed **and** capable of work.
- You must be over 18 and under age 66.
- You must be available **and** genuinely seeking work.
- You must satisfy a means test.
- Meet the Habitual Residence Condition.
- In general, if you have a reasonable level of pension from a former employer, you are unlikely to qualify for this allowance.



BACK TO WORK AND EDUCATION

If you are getting an unemployment payment for some time, you may be eligible for the Back to Work Allowance or the Back to Education Allowance.

Safeguarding your entitlements:

- If you retire early, you will have a number of years during which you have no PRSI contributions. This will mean that you may have difficulty in qualifying for the State Pension (Contributory).
- If you are not employed or self employed, you do not have to pay PRSI contributions. You can keep your PRSI contribution record up to date either by getting credits or paying Voluntary PRSI contributions.

Credits

- You get social insurance credits while getting Jobseeker's Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance.
- If you are receiving one of these benefits up to age 65 or 66, you do not need to do anything else to maintain your social insurance record.
- If you do not qualify for Jobseeker's Allowance because you do not pass the means test, you can sign on for credits. Usually, you are allowed sign on once a month.
- If you do not qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance because you are considered to be unavailable for work, you may **not** be able to sign on for credits either. If this is the case or if you want to spend all or part of your retirement abroad, you can become a voluntary contributor to social insurance. You should apply to the Department of Social and Family Affairs to become a voluntary contributor within a year of retirement.

EARLY RETIREMENT

Early retirement means retirement before the age of 65. Early retirement may occur because you must retire from your job at a certain age, because you choose to take early retirement or because you have been let go. Sometimes people who are described as taking early retirement have actually been made redundant. Others who have been obliged to take early retirement may regard themselves as unemployed. The following outlines your entitlements to social welfare benefits if you retire early and what arrangements you should make to keep your entitlement to a state pension.

- **If you are made redundant** you may qualify for a statutory redundancy lump sum payment. The statutory (that means laid down by law) lump sum is the minimum sum that you must get. A higher payment may of course be negotiated with your employer, either by you or by your union. You can get more information about redundancy on the Citizens Information website:
www.citizensinformation.ie
- **If you retire early** for whatever reason, you may be entitled to Jobseeker's Benefit and later to Jobseeker's Allowance. You may also be eligible for a range of back to work and back to education schemes. If you do retire early, you should organise to continue your PRSI contributions to ensure that, your entitlement to a State Pension (Contributory) is maintained.
- **If you are unemployed** whether you consider yourself to be retired or unemployed, you may be eligible for Jobseeker's Benefit if you are aged under 66 which lasts for a maximum of 15 months. You may then be eligible for Jobseeker's Allowance.

Working in Retirement in Ireland

Some people take early retirement in order to take up another job or to become self employed. Many people aged over the "normal" retirement age are employed. There are a small number of occupations that have statutory upper age limits but, in general, there is no rule which prevents people over the age of 65 from being employed or self-employed.

- If you are receiving a social welfare benefit such as State Pension (Transition) working may affect your entitlement.
- If you were a permanent and pensionable public servant, your pension may be abated if you go back to work in the public sector.
- It is generally not possible to further contribute to an occupational pension scheme after the normal age of retirement.
- **There are specific tax arrangements for people aged over 65 including the taxation of pensions.**

Upper age limit for working

- There is **no** upper age limit for employment. However, in certain jobs, there is a statutory upper age limit **and** there is a mandatory retirement age in many contracts of employment.
- You cannot continue to work in a job beyond the statutory age limit. If your contract of employment includes a mandatory upper age limit, then you must retire when you reach that limit.
- However, it is open to you and your employer to negotiate another contract. If you are subject to a statutory or mandatory retirement age in your job, there is nothing to prevent you taking up a different job when you retire or being self employed.

Effect on social welfare payments

- If you are receiving any social welfare payment other than the State Pension (Contributory) or Widow's/Widower's (Contributory) Pension, working **will** affect your entitlement.
- It may be possible to do some part time work and retain entitlement to part of your Jobseeker's Benefit or Allowance.

Pre-Retirement Allowance

It may be possible to do some work and retain some entitlement.



PENSIONS

State Pension (Transition)

- One of the conditions for receiving a State Pension (Transition) is that you must be retired which means that you must **not** be in insurable employment or self employment. Your earnings must be less than €38 a week from employment or €3,174 a year from self employment. If you have an income from savings or investments, you could be liable for self employed PRSI but, that would not debar you from a State Pension (Transition) if you are not actually engaged in self-employment.
- This condition ends when you reach the age of 66. At that stage, you may have earnings from any source without affecting your entitlement to a State Pension (Transition).
- You may transfer to the State Pension (Contributory) if that would be to your advantage. From age 66, it does not matter what your pension is called, the retirement condition no longer applies.

State Pension (Contributory)

If you are receiving the State Pension (Contributory), you may work or be self employed without affecting your entitlement.

Occupational Pensions

- While receiving an occupational pension you may also work or be self employed. If you are receiving a private sector pension, working or being self employed does not usually affect it.
- However, most public sector pension schemes are subject to what is called abatement if you return to work in the public sector. In general, abatement means that the pension is reduced in order to ensure that you do not earn more between the pension and the income from employment than you would if you had remained in employment.
- If you are getting a public service pension and you go to work in the private sector, your pension is not affected.

Contributions to occupational pensions

- As an employed person, you may contribute to the new employment pension scheme if you are eligible. Most occupational pension schemes do not cater for contributions over the age of 65 but it is possible that some do. It is possible to get tax relief on contributions up to age 70.
- If you are self employed or your new employment does not include an occupational pension, you could decide to make arrangements for a personal pension. Again, the upper age limit for tax relief for such contributions is 70.

Protective employee legislation

Most legislation dealing with the protection of employees does not have an upper age limit. If you are an older worker, whether full or part time, you are covered by protective legislation dealing with the following areas:

- Information about your terms and conditions of employment.
- Holidays and leave.
- National minimum wage.
- Maximum working hours, rest periods, Sunday working, night working.

Minimum Notice

The amount of notice is related to the length of service. If you lose your job and your employer owes you money for arrears of pay, holidays and a number of other items, you may claim this from the Redundancy and Employers' Insolvency Fund.

Unfair Dismissal

Under the Unfair Dismissals Acts, dismissal on the grounds of age is unfair with certain exceptions. People who must leave employment when they reach the retirement age stated in their contract may not claim unfair dismissal. If you are unfairly dismissed, at whatever age, you may complain to the Employment Appeals Tribunal, which may order reinstatement or compensation.

Redundancy

If you are made redundant you may be entitled to a redundancy payment. If you are aged 66 or over and you were made redundant before 8 May 2007 you are not eligible for a statutory redundancy payment.

Social Insurance (PRSI) Payments

- If you are aged under 66 **and** you are employed or self employed, you are liable to pay PRSI in the normal way. If you are a former public servant and you take up a job in the private sector, you have to pay full PRSI. However, you may be able to qualify for a pro-rata old age contributory pension.
- You only pay PRSI on your income from employment or self employment. You do not have to pay PRSI on your pension from a former employment.
- If you take up part time work or low paid work, you are still in the PRSI system but you may not have to pay anything.
- If you earn less than €352 a week, you don't have to pay PRSI. If you earn over €38, your employer has to pay and you have full cover.

- Over the €352 limit, you have to pay on all your income from work above €127 a week until you reach the employee PRSI ceiling.

You are not liable for PRSI contributions after the age of 66, whether or not you are employed or self employed. If you do not have enough contributions at age 66, you cannot add to them after that. Unlike some occupational pension arrangements, there is no facility to retrospectively pay PRSI contributions.

Health Levy

Even though the health levy is usually deducted with your PRSI contribution, the rules which apply to it are quite different. It may be charged on all your income, so you may have to pay it on your pension from your former employer.

You may not be liable for the health levy if:

- You have a medical card.
- Your income is less than €500 a week. Above this limit, you have to pay the 4% on all your income, unless you are otherwise not liable.
- You are receiving a Widow's/Widower's Pension or any of the one parent family benefits from the Department of Social and Family Affairs or the equivalent from an EU member state.



MOBILITY ALLOWANCE

This is a **means tested** supplementary monthly payment from the Health Service Executive (HSE) for people with severe disabilities who are **unable to walk**.

How to qualify

- You must be between 16 and 66 and **unable to walk**, even with the use of artificial limbs or other suitable aids, **or** the exertion required to walk would be dangerous to your health. The inability to walk must be likely to persist for at least one year and you must be able to benefit from a change of surroundings.
- You must satisfy a means test similar to that for Disability Allowance.
- The allowance is not available to new applicants aged 66 or over. If you were getting the allowance before reaching 66, you can continue to receive it.
- Mobility Allowance is paid monthly. There are two rates of payment. The higher rate is only paid to people **who do not claim** the Disabled Drivers and Passengers Tax Relief.
- Mobility Allowance is **not** paid to those who received a Motorised Transport Grant for three years from the date of the grant.

How to apply

Apply to your Local Health Office.

FREE TRAVEL

- The Free Travel Pass is available to people aged 66 and over and to certain incapacitated people under age 66. It allows you to travel, free of charge, on public transport and on a number of private bus and ferry services.
- There is no restriction on the amount of free travel you use or the times of travel. Those who qualify for free travel are also entitled to have their spouse or partner travel free with them.
- If you are unable to travel alone for medical reasons, you may get a Companion Free Travel Pass (see below), which allows a person over the age of 16 years to accompany you, free of charge.

Where can I travel to

Free travel is available on road, rail and DART services operated by Dublin Bus, Bus Éireann, Iarnród Éireann, LUAS services, the Aran Islands ferry service and on certain private services which have opted into the scheme. You can also use your Free Travel Pass on any of the schemes under the Rural Transport Initiative. Free Travel Pass holders can complete return trips to Northern Ireland free of charge. If you are aged 66 or over, you can also travel free on journeys that start and end within Northern Ireland. In order to do this, you must have a Senior SmartPass. You can get an application form for a Senior SmartPass from your local social welfare office.

Companion Free Travel Pass

This pass allows you to have someone aged 16 or over accompany you free of charge when travelling if you have been **medically assessed as unable to travel alone**.

How to apply

A Free Travel Pass is issued automatically if you are resident in the State and receiving Blind Person's Pension, Invalidity Pension, Disability Allowance or Carer's Allowance. It is also issued automatically when you reach the age of 66, if you are getting a pension from the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) and are resident in the State.

If you do not get a Free Travel Pass automatically, but think you may qualify, you can apply to the Free Travel section of the DSFA.

USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT WITH A DISABILITY

The National Disability Authority (NDA) has produced Recommended Accessibility Guidelines for Public Transport Operators in Ireland to help bus, rail and light rail operators in Ireland make their services more accessible to passengers with disabilities.

Trains

Iarnród Éireann produces a guide for rail travellers, including DART users, entitled Guide for Rail Passengers with Disabilities. This is available free of charge at stations and can be downloaded from www.irishrail.ie. It offers advice and provides information on facilities available at each station.

Buses

Dublin Bus has a travel assistance scheme. The scheme helps people with disabilities to build confidence to use the service by themselves. Trained travel assistants accompany you on your journey for the first few times you use the service. This free service is available to anyone over the age of 18 who would like to use public transport, but needs assistance and information in order to use it independently.

Transport services for people with disabilities

Various organisations provide transport services for people with disabilities. A company called 'Vantastic' provides a transport service for people with disabilities in Dublin and in a number of other areas around the country. To find out what service is available outside Dublin, contact your local Centre for Independent Living [*also see Useful Contact Information*]



DRIVING WITH A DISABILITY

- You may have to complete a medical report if you are 70 years of age or over, or have certain disabilities. You are asked on your driving test application form to outline whether you are driving an adapted vehicle. This will ensure that any necessary arrangements are in place for you on the day of your test.
- Driving tests for drivers with a disability are broadly the same as those for all other motorists. Your examiner should be specially trained to be aware of your needs. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you are allowed to have an interpreter accompany you for the first part of the test.

Motorised Transport Grant

This is a means tested grant paid by the Health Service Executive towards the purchase and/or adaptation of a car by a person with a severe disability where the car is essential to retain employment. The grant can be made to a self employed person. **If you avail of the grant, you will not be eligible for Mobility Allowance for three years from the date of the grant.**

Adaptations and Driving

The Irish Wheelchair Association and the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland provide advice on suitable car adaptations to meet individual needs. These organisations run driving schools for people with disabilities and provide information and advice on all aspects of motoring.

Disabled Person's Parking Card

This card is for people with certain disabilities, **whether they are drivers or passengers**. It costs €25. It applies to the person rather than the car. Card holders can park in designated disabled parking spaces.

How to qualify

This card is for people whose disability affects their mobility, including people who are registered as blind. If you already have a Primary Medical Certificate from the HSE, you automatically qualify but must apply. Generally, the card is **not** issued to anyone under five years of age.

How to apply

This scheme is administered by the Disabled Drivers Association and the Irish Wheelchair Association. Apply in writing to either organisation for the application form, stating your disability and how it affects your mobility, together with a stamped addressed envelope. **You will need to get the form completed by the Gardai and your doctor unless you have a Primary Medical**

Disabled Drivers and Passengers Tax Relief

This scheme provides a range of tax reliefs in relation to the purchase and use of specially adapted vehicles by drivers and passengers with severe disabilities.

How to qualify

Meet the specified medical criteria and have a Primary Medical Certificate to that effect which is a certificate signed by your doctor certifying your level of disability. If you qualify, you may claim:

- **Exemption or refund of Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT) and Value Added Tax (VAT) on the purchase of a specially adapted car.**
- **Exemption or refund of VAT on the cost of adaptation, up to a maximum of €9,525 for a disabled driver and €15,875 for a disabled passenger.**
- **Repayment of excise duty on fuel used (petrol, for example) up to a maximum of 600 gallons (2,728 litres) per year.**
- **Exemption from annual motor tax.**

The maximum engine size allowed for a driver with a disability is 2,000cc and 4,000cc for a passenger. A car which qualifies for tax relief cannot be sold for at least two years.

How to apply

Apply to the Revenue Commissioners.

Note: People who benefit from the Disabled Drivers and Passengers Tax Relief are only eligible for the lower rate of Mobility Allowance.

AA Breakdown Service

The Automobile Association (AA) offers a limited free breakdown service to members of the Disabled Drivers Association and the Irish Wheelchair Association, **provided such service can be delivered by the AA's own staff.** The free service does not extend to Home Start or other specialist services.

Toll road charges

Both disabled drivers and disabled passengers with specially adapted vehicles are exempt from toll charges on national roads throughout Ireland.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

The Department of Social and Family Affairs deals directly with complaints about the service customers receive (for example delays, mistakes or other comments on services). If you are refused a social welfare payment or get less than you expected, you can appeal the decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office. This office operates independently of the Department of Social and Family Affairs. You should note that the Appeals Office only deals with what are known as legislative schemes. Administrative schemes, such as the Household Benefits scheme, do not come under the remit of the Appeals Office. You will find a list of the schemes which come within the jurisdiction of the Appeals Office on their website.

There is no formal appeals system for the Household Benefits Package (free electricity, gas etc.) or Free Travel, but entitlements can be reviewed at any time.

USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Social and Family Affairs

Free Travel Section

Social Welfare Services

College Road, Sligo

Lo-call: 1890 500 000 Tel: (071) 915 7100

Information Services

Lo-call: 1890 66 22 44 (for general information) Website: www.welfare.ie

Dublin Bus

Accessibility Officer

59 Upper O'Connell Street

Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 703 3204

Email: travelassist@dublinbus.ie Website: www.dublinbus.ie

Centres for Independent Living

Carmichael House

Dublin 7

Tel: (01) 873 0455 or (01) 873 0986

Email: info@dublincil.org Website: www.dublincil.org

Disabled Drivers' Association of Ireland

Ballindine

Co. Mayo

Tel: (094) 936 4266/4054

E-mail: info@ddai.ie Website: www.ddai.ie

Irish Wheelchair Association

National Mobility Centre
Ballinagappa Road
Clane
Co. Kildare
Tel: (045) 893 094 Website: www.iwa.ie

Office of the Revenue Commissioners

Central Repayments Office
Coolshannagh
Co. Monaghan
Tel: (047) 82800 Website: www.revenue.ie

VAT Repayments Section

Government Buildings
Kilrush Road,
Ennis,
Co Clare
Lo-call: 1890 202 033

Vantastic

Unit 2A
Howth Junction Park
Kilbarrack
Dublin 5
Freephone: 1800 242 703 Tel: (01) 839 2449
Email: info@vantastic.ie Website: www.vantastic.ie

Health Service Executive

HSE Information Line:
Tel: 1850 24 1850 Website: www.hse.ie

Social Welfare Services

Ballinalee Road, Longford
Tel: (043) 334 0000 Lo-call: 1890 927 770
(For information on: Disability Allowance & Benefit and Invalidity Pension)

Social Welfare Appeals Office

D'Olier House, D'Olier Street, Dublin 2
Lo-call: 1890 74 74 34
Email: swappeals@welfare.ie Website: www.socialwelfareappeals.ie

You can find more information on benefits, allowances and entitlements at your local Citizens Information Centre or on www.citizensinformation.ie
Lo-call: 1890 777 121, Monday to Friday from 9am to 9pm.

[Information in this booklet has been taken from the Citizens Information 27 Website]

The Irish Haemophilia Society
First Floor
Cathedral Court
New Street
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 6579900
Website: www.haemophilia.ie
Email: info@haemophilia.ie