

## Benefits and Entitlements

This document details some Benefits and Entitlements that you may be eligible for if your child is attending a Children's Disability Network Team.

Applying for benefits and entitlements can be an emotive experience for parents as it is often necessary when filling in forms to focus on what your child finds challenging rather than his or her strengths. The language used on some official forms can also be insensitive and outdated. This can make form filling more difficult but should not be a barrier to applying.

It can be very difficult to describe on paper how your child presents, to a person who has never met you or your child. Some parents have found it useful to outline in writing an average day with their child, describing the help and support you provide to complete each task and the challenges that may present throughout the day.

It may also be helpful to ask for advice from other parents who have experience of filling in the same forms, or from a professional who is working with your child. If you have difficulty in filling in forms, or if your application is refused and you need to make an appeal, you can request to meet the Social Worker on the Children's Disability Network Team for support.

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## **Domiciliary Care Allowance**

Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) is a monthly payment for a child aged under 16 with a disability, who requires ongoing care and attention, substantially over and above the care and attention usually required by a child of the same age. It is paid directly to the parent (guardian or foster parent) of the child, with whom the child is habitually resident. It is not means-tested, so it does not take into account your own income or any other social welfare payments. It is not based on the type of disability or a diagnosis, but on the support needs which result in your child requiring more care and attention than another child of the same age. Consider also the developmental milestones that are appropriate for your child's age. Some parents like to include a daily diary or a family impact statement to support their application. It is important that the section filled in by your GP gives an accurate representation of your child's needs; if your GP does not know your child well it is advised to speak to them before they fill in the form.

The Dom Care 3 (Specialist) form does not have to be included, but if your child is seeing a consultant such as a paediatrician or neurologist regularly it may be helpful for them to complete this. Otherwise you should include copies of diagnostic reports and any recent clinical assessments. You may wish to refer to the 'Medical Eligibility Guidelines for DCA', which are available on [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie).

The current rate of Domiciliary Care Allowance rate is €360 per month. There is no restriction on the number of children for whom you may claim Domiciliary Care Allowance (In other words, if you are caring for more than 1 child who qualifies for Domiciliary Care Allowance, you may claim the full monthly allowance for each child).



Domiciliary Care Allowance is a 'gateway allowance' for eligibility for Carers Allowance and the Carers Support Grant. All children who qualify for DCA are entitled to a medical card. You can download an application form from [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie).

### **Carers Support Grant (formerly Respite Care Grant)**

The Carer's Support Grant is an annual payment made to carers by the Department of Social Protection. The scheme name was changed from the Respite Care Grant in 2016 to better reflect how the Grant is used. Carers can use the grant in whatever way they wish. You can use the grant to pay for respite care if you wish, but you do not have to do so.

In June of each year (on the first Thursday of the month), the grant is paid automatically to carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit, or Domiciliary Care Allowance from the Department of Social Protection. In some circumstances, for example if your child is over 16, you may make a separate 'stand alone' application for this payment. This only applies if the carer is working under 18.5 hours a week. Only one Carer's Support Grant can be paid for each person getting care. The current rate of this payment is €2000.

### **Carers Leave**

The Carer's Leave Act 2001 allows employees to leave their employment temporarily or to reduce their hours to provide full-time care for someone in need of full-time care and attention (for example a child in receipt of Domiciliary Care Allowance). For a young person over 16 the GP will need to fill in a section of the form to demonstrate that the person requires full time care and attention. Your right to Carer's Leave from employment is complemented by the Carer's Benefit Scheme. You are entitled to take carer's leave of at least 13 weeks up to a maximum of 104 weeks. If you ask to take less than 13 weeks' carer's leave, your employer may refuse your request.

Carer's Leave from employment is unpaid but the Carer's Leave Act ensures that those who propose to avail of Carer's Leave will have their jobs kept open for them for the duration of the leave. You may be eligible for Carer's Benefit if you have enough PRSI contributions. If you do not qualify for Carer's Benefit you may qualify for Carer's Allowance depending on your household means. You can take Carer's Leave even if you do not qualify for either of these payments.

### **Carers Benefit**

Carers Benefit is a payment for people who have made social insurance (PRSI) contributions and who have recently left the workforce or have reduced their hours of



work to 18.5 hours per week or less and are looking after somebody in need of full-time care and attention (for example a child who qualifies for Domiciliary Care Allowance). You do not have to be the person who gets the allowance for the child to be the child's carer. The current rate of Carers Benefit is €261 per week. You can claim an additional half-rate payment if caring for more than one person. You can also earn up to €450 (€625 from July 2025) from part-time work in addition to your payment. You may get an increase in your Carer's Benefit payment if you have a child dependent (including the child with a disability). If your child is in full-time education, you may get this increase until the end of the academic year in which the child reaches 22.

You are entitled to Carers Benefit for a total of 104 weeks per qualifying person. Both parents of a qualifying child have a separate entitlement to Carers Leave and Carers Benefit, once the child resides with them, and it is taken at a different time. For example, the mother of a qualifying child can take 104 weeks leave, and then subsequently the child's father can take a further 104 weeks leave. If you decide not to return to work, you can apply for Carers Allowance once the full Carers Benefit has been paid. You are not entitled to the Household Benefits package and Free Travel under the Carer's Benefit Scheme. Carers receiving Carers Benefit are now entitled to a GP Visit card.

Carers Benefit is a taxable income and Carers must self-declare to Revenue that they are in receipt of this payment or you may be liable to pay back tax.

### **Carers Allowance**

Carers Allowance is a means-tested payment for carers who look after a person in need of full-time care and attention on a full time basis. The current allowable income disregard is €900 per couple, or €450 for a single carer. This disregard will go up to €1250 per couple (€625 for single carer) in July 2025. You must be 18 years old or over and not employed, self-employed or in training or education for more than 18.5 hours per week. You cannot get Carers Allowance for a child under 16 unless they qualify for Domiciliary Care Allowance. For a young person over sixteen, a medical report has to be filled in demonstrating that the young person requires full time care and attention.

If you are in receipt of another social welfare payment such as One Parent family Payment and you are providing someone with full time care and attention you may qualify for a reduced rate of Carers Allowance as well as your original payment. If you have dependent children, you will be entitled to a full or half rate Qualified Child increase. If you are caring for more than one person, you can apply for an additional half-payment of Carers Allowance. Recipients of Carers Allowance will also qualify for



the Household Benefits Scheme and the Free Travel Scheme. All carers in receipt of Carers Allowance are also entitled to a GP Visit card.

Carer's Allowance is a taxable source of income and should be advised to your local tax office. It is up to each individual receiving Carer's Allowance to notify the Office of the Revenue Commissioners that they have been awarded the payment.

### **Disability Allowance**

When your child turns 16, they will no longer be entitled to a Domiciliary Care Allowance. They may however be entitled to Disability Allowance. Disability Allowance is a weekly allowance paid to people with a disability, who are unable to work. This is not paid automatically; your teenager will need to make an application (or you can help them to do so). The application form will need to detail why the young person would not be able to work in a job that would otherwise be suitable for a person of their age and experience. A medical report from the GP is also needed.

You can receive Disability Allowance from 16 years of age. If you are in education when you turn 16, you can continue to attend school. The payment is made directly to the young person so they will need a bank account or can collect it in the post office. Some parents may wish to enquire about setting up a 'Special Needs' bank account with their local bank so that they can help their son or daughter manage their money. You can accrue up to €50,000 in savings before your Disability Allowance will be affected.

### **Incapacitated Child Tax Credit**

This tax credit can be claimed where a claimant proves that he or she has living with them at any time during the tax year, a child who is permanently incapacitated either physically or mentally from maintaining him or herself. The claimant needs to be either a parent or have legal custody of the child (eg a step-parent). You will need to provide a letter from your GP confirming that in their professional opinion there is a reasonable expectation that your child will be permanently unable to maintain himself or herself. This tax credit can be backdated for four years including the current tax year. You can apply for the tax credit online at [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie) as below:

- sign into myAccount
- click on 'Manage your tax 2023'
- select 'add new credits'
- select 'You and your family' and 'Incapacitated Child Tax Credit'
- complete the required fields and upload the form ICC2.



You can also make a claim for previous years using myAccount.

For 2019 and subsequent years on <https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-credits-reliefs-and-exemptions/children/incapacitated-child-credit/index.aspx>

Incapacitated child tax credit continues to be paid for an adult with a disability who became incapacitated before the age of 18 (or 22 if in education) and who lives with and is maintained by the claimant.

### **Home Carer Tax Credit**

To claim the Home Carer Tax Credit you must care for a dependent person. The amount of this is €1950. You will receive the full amount if earning up to €7200 yearly. Carers Allowance is not taken into account for this credit.

You must also be married or in a civil partnership and be jointly assessed for Income Tax.

The dependent person you care for must be either:

- a child for whom you receive the child benefit payment from the Department of Social Protection
- a person aged 65 years or over
- a person who is permanently incapacitated due to mental or physical disability.

### **Tax relief on employing a home carer**

You can claim tax relief on the cost of employing a carer if you employ one for yourself or for another family member.

You can employ the carer directly or you can use an agency that employs carers.

If you employ the carer yourself, you should register as an employer and you will be responsible for your employee's tax and social insurance (PAYE, Universal Social Charge and PRSI). If you pay an agency to provide the carer, the agency will employ the carer and be responsible for their tax and social insurance. You can still claim tax relief on the cost of paying the agency to provide a carer. If you employ a carer for yourself or on behalf of a family member, you can claim tax relief on the cost of that care. A family member is a spouse, civil partner, child or a relative, including a relation by marriage or civil partnership.

The person being cared for must be totally incapacitated throughout the tax year (January to December) in which you are claiming the tax relief. However, this is not a requirement for the first year. The term totally incapacitated means that the person



being cared for is disabled and requires a carer. The carer does not have to be employed for the full tax year.

You cannot claim tax relief for employing a carer if the carer only carries out housekeeper duties or if you are already getting a Dependent Relative Tax Credit or an Incapacitated Child Tax Credit.

You cannot claim for costs paid by the Health Service Executive (HSE) or a local authority.

### **Home nursing**

You can also claim tax relief on the cost of employing a qualified nurse at home. Tax relief for nursing at home is claimed as a health expense.

You can claim tax relief (at your highest rate) on the lower of the following two amounts:

- The actual cost or
- The maximum of €75,000

You must claim the relief each year.

If pay for the care with others, the relief is divided between you in proportion to the amount each of you paid.

You can use Revenue's online myAccount service to claim tax relief for employing a carer.

### **Free energy upgrades (Warmer Homes Scheme)**

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) provides free home energy upgrades to homeowners who get certain social welfare payments. These upgrades help improve the energy efficiency and warmth of your home and are also known as the Warmer Homes Scheme.

The scheme prioritises the oldest and least energy efficient homes. You can apply for the free upgrades again if you've already had work done under the scheme, but your home would benefit from more upgrades. To access the scheme again you must still meet the qualifying criteria.

The scheme covers these home energy upgrades:

- Attic insulation
- Wall insulation - including cavity wall, internal wall and external wall insulation
- Draught-proofing





- Lagging jackets
- Energy efficient lighting
- Energy advice

New central heating systems and replacement windows are also occasionally covered by the scheme. Your windows will only be replaced if your walls are being insulated at the same time and the existing windows are single-glazed windows. The SEAI decides if replacement windows are needed on a case by case basis.

To qualify for this scheme you must meet these criteria:

- You must own your home and be living in it
- Your home must have been built and occupied before 2006
- Your home must have a BER of C,D,E,F or G
- You must be getting one of the following social welfare payments:
  - Fuel Allowance
  - Working Family Payment
  - Jobseeker's Allowance for over 6 months and have a child aged under 7
  - Disability Allowance for over 6 months and have a child aged under 7
  - Domiciliary Care Allowance
  - One Parent Family Payment
  - Carer's Allowance and you must live with the person you care for

Note: If you don't have a BER for your home, the SEAI will do a free BER to check that your home meets the qualifying criteria of having a BER of C or lower

Where to apply:

Free Energy Upgrades (Warmer Homes Scheme)

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

P.O. Box 119

Caherciveen

Kerry





Ireland

Locall: 01808 2100

Homepage: <http://www.seai.ie/>

### **Medical Card**

If you have a medical card you don't have to pay to see your doctor, or for medicines they prescribe. A standard prescription charge per item applies.

A medical card also covers:

- public out-patient and in-patient services
- eye and ear tests
- dental checks

Application for a medical card is means-tested. If your means exceed the allowances for a medical card you may still be eligible for a GP visit card. You can download an application form at [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie).

Since 1 June 2017, all children in receipt of Domiciliary Care Allowance are eligible for a medical card without a means test. If the child does not already have a medical card or GP visit card, you can register them online or download a registration form. If the child already has a medical card or GP visit card, they will be automatically registered. There is a special form to register for a medical card when in receipt of DCA, which is available at the following link:

<https://www2.hse.ie/file-library/medical-cards/domiciliary-care-allowance-medical-card-registration-form.pdf>

A young person aged over 16 who is receiving Disability Allowance can apply for a Medical card in their own name and is only means tested on their own income.

### **Long Term Illness Card**

Under the Long-Term Illness (LTI) Scheme you can get some drugs, medicines and approved appliances for free from your pharmacy if you have one of the conditions listed below. The scheme is not means tested and is open to those 'ordinarily resident' in Ireland:

The conditions covered by the scheme are:

- Acute leukaemia
- Cerebral palsy



- Cystic fibrosis
- Diabetes insipidus
- Diabetes mellitus (does not include Gestational Diabetes)
- Epilepsy
- Haemophilia
- Hydrocephalus
- Intellectual disability
- Mental Illness - under the age of 16 years
- Muscular dystrophy
- Multiple sclerosis
- Parkinsonism
- Phenylketonuria (PKU)
- Spina bifida
- Thalidomide conditions

If you have a medical condition that is not listed above, you can apply for a medical card.

### **Free Nappies Scheme**

This scheme is available locally to children over the age of three who require nappies and are eligible for Domiciliary Care Allowance. For further information, you should contact your Public Health Nurse.

### **Home Tuition Grant**

Home tuition is intended to provide education for children with a diagnosis of autism or who have a significant special educational need and who are awaiting the provision of an appropriate school based educational service. The form to apply for this can be downloaded from [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie). It is available for children from the age of 2.5 years with a diagnosis of autism, and over 3 if a suitable early intervention or primary school placement is not available. In some circumstances Home Tuition may be allocated when a child's school placement has broken down. The Special Education Needs Officer will be able to further advise you on individual circumstances.



Parents need to identify a suitably qualified teacher to provide the service. Details and qualifications of the teacher must be included in the application form. This may be submitted with the home tuition application or directly to the Home Tuition Section, Special Education, indicating the name of the child to whom he/she will be delivering home tuition. Sanction of Home Tuition will only be given when full details of the proposed teacher are provided to the Department of Education and Science and the application has been fully completed. Copies of recent psychological assessment/any available professional reports should be attached.

Home Tuition is sanctioned on a term basis only/or until a school placement has been sourced (arrangements should not be entered into with teachers in anticipation of funding beyond the sanction date unless Department of Education & Science sanction has been received). Retrospective Grant Claim Forms will not be processed.

### **Summer Programme (July Provision)**

The Summer Programme includes:

- School-based summer programme for children with special educational needs in special classes, special schools and mainstream schools
- Home-based provision for children with complex needs (where a school-based programme is not available)
- Summer camps in DEIS schools focussing on numeracy and literacy. All primary schools and post-primary schools including DEIS will have the opportunity to provide a 2-week summer programme for mainstream pupils with complex needs and those at greatest risk of educational disadvantage.

Summer Provision is based on the July Provision programme which was delivered to children with special educational needs by the Department of Education in previous years.

The following children qualify for the school-based programme:

- Children in a special school or a special class
- Children in mainstream classes in primary schools who are accessing the highest level of the continuum of support. This includes children with autism, Down syndrome, sensory impairments, and other disabilities who were identified for the supplementary programme earlier this year.

Children in the above categories entering primary school next September are also eligible for the programme.



All primary schools and post-primary schools have the opportunity to provide a new 2 week summer programme for mainstream pupils with complex needs and those at greatest risk of educational disadvantage.

All special schools will also have the opportunity to provide a summer programme.

The programme will take place in the child's school between July and August.

The home-based programme is only available if your child's school is not running a school-based programme or it does not have capacity to accommodate your child in the programme.

The home-based programme funds the employment of care support or a tutor for 10 hours per week for 4 weeks. It will run between 9am and 6m, Monday to Friday. The four weeks do not have to be consecutive and can take place any time during the summer holidays. The tutor must be a registered teacher or a special needs assistant (SNA) and meet child protection criteria. Support must be provided one to one.

The school will contact parents of eligible children and provide a Grant Claim Form. The school will complete Part 1 of the form. If a school cannot provide a teacher or SNA, the parents must employ one.

Find out more about the 2025 home based summer programme by contacting the Department of Education.

### **Mobility Aids Grant Scheme**

The Mobility Aids Grant Scheme provides grants for works designed to address mobility problems in the home, such as the purchase and installation of grab-rails, a level access shower, access ramps or a stair-lift. The scheme is primarily for older people, but people with a disability can also apply for it.

If you need more extensive works done, or if you do not qualify under the means test, you can apply for the Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability

### **Housing Adaptation Grant**

A Housing Adaptation Grant is available from local authorities if you need to make changes to a home to make it more suitable for a person with a disability. You can apply if you own your house, are in a long term private rental agreement, or are purchasing your home from the local authority. If you are in local authority housing, your housing authority should meet the full cost of the works once approved.

The grant can help you to make changes and adaptations to your home, for example, making it wheelchair-accessible, extending it to create more space, adding a ground-



floor bathroom or toilet or a stairlift. In some cases, the provision of heating can be included. The grant may also be available to provide funds to adapt your home to build a sensory room or space for a family member(s) with Autism or Sensory Processing Disorder.

If you only require minor work, such as installing grab rails or a ramp, you can apply for the means-tested Mobility Aids Grant Scheme instead. The grant is available to households whose gross annual household income does not exceed €60,000. Your total household income is assessed to find out if you qualify for the grant and the amount payable. Application forms are available from your local authority; [www.corkcoco.ie](http://www.corkcoco.ie) or [www.corkcity.ie](http://www.corkcity.ie).

### **Drivers and Passengers with Disabilities- Tax relief scheme**

The Scheme is open to individuals who meet the specified medical criteria and have obtained a Primary Medical Certificate to that effect. You can apply for relief either as a driver with a disability or a passenger with a disability. Alternatively, there is provision for a family member of a passenger with a disability to apply.

In order to avail of this scheme, applicants must be in possession of a Primary Medical Certificate (PMC). The medical assessment and the issuing of the certificate are carried out by a Senior Area Medical Officer attached to the local HSE office. The scheme is open to drivers and passengers with physical disabilities.

A Primary Medical Certificate confirms you are severely and permanently disabled and:

1. Are completely or almost completely without the use of both legs and
2. Are completely without the use of one of your legs and almost completely without the use of the other leg to the extent that you are severely restricted as regards movement in your legs or
3. Are without both hands or both arms or
4. Are without one or both legs or
5. Are completely or almost completely without the use of both hands or arms and completely or almost completely without the use of one leg or
6. Have the medical condition of "dwarfism" and serious difficulties of movement of the legs

Participation in the scheme allows people to avail of:

- ❑ Exemption from VRT



- ❑ Refund of VAT
- ❑ Exemption from motor tax
- ❑ Refund of duty paid on petrol and diesel (max 2,730L)
- ❑ Exempt from tolls on each toll road in the state

For further information contact Revenue or the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland:

Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland

Ballindine

Claremorris

Co. Mayo

[info@ddai.ie](mailto:info@ddai.ie)

[www.ddai.ie](http://www.ddai.ie)

Phone: 094 936 4054

The Office of the Revenue Commissioners

Central Repayments Office

Freepost

M: TEK II Building,

Armagh Road

Monaghan

[www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie)

Phone 047-62100

### **Disabled Persons Parking Permit**

If your child is over the age of three, and their mobility is restricted, you may be eligible to apply for a Disabled Persons Parking Permit, which is recognised across the EU and entitles the holder to park in a disabled parking bay free of charge for an unlimited period of time. You may apply for a parking permit through the IWA (Irish Wheelchair Association) or the DDAl (Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland). There is a useful



guide to the process available on the IWA website. The permit lasts for a period of two years.

### **Useful websites for further information:**

[www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)

For information on any of the above; the citizens information service provide online and phone support in relation to any enquiries about rights, benefits and entitlements.

[www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie)

For application forms for social welfare payments and other government departments

[www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie)

For tax relief and credits

[www.informingparents.ie](http://www.informingparents.ie)

[www.shineireland.com](http://www.shineireland.com)

Advocacy and support for parents of autistic children

[www.iwa.ie](http://www.iwa.ie)

For information on parking permit and accessibility issues

[www.financialwellbeing.ie](http://www.financialwellbeing.ie)

Advice for special needs parents on financial issues

[www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie)

Money and budgeting advice and support

[www.familycarers.ie](http://www.familycarers.ie)

For advocacy, advice and support.