

## Information on HSE Services & Financial Supports for people living with dementia

This information provides an overview of some of the support services that may be available to you through the Health Service Executive (HSE), and financial supports that may be available through the Department of Social Protection.

The **Alzheimer Society of Ireland** provides a range of supports and services to people with dementia and their families. Information about these services can be accessed by calling our Helpline at 1800 341 341, emailing [helpline@alzheimer.ie](mailto:helpline@alzheimer.ie) or via Live Chat by visiting [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)

### Health Service Executive (HSE)

HSELive 1850 24 1850 or 041 6850300  
email: [hselive@hse.ie](mailto:hselive@hse.ie) website: [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

The HSE has responsibility for the delivery of public health community and home care supports at a local level in Ireland.

### Public Health Nurses

Public Health Nurses provide an essential link to community and home care services provided by the HSE. If a person is diagnosed with dementia, it is important that they and their family have contact with their local Public Health Nurse. This is particularly important if the person with dementia lives alone.

The Public Health Nurse works in your local Health Centre and can visit you in your home and provide access to a range of services including:

- **Home Support Service** - including help with dressing, feeding and other personal care tasks. The PHN often arranges this service, see below for information.
- **Liaison service between hospital care and home** - for further care which may be needed at home after hospital
- **Home visits**-including practical advice on care techniques
- **Referral for carer training** - such as lifting, handling and strategies for coping
- **Advice and assistance on continence management**
- Referral to **day care, respite, meals on wheels** and other local services.
- **Information**- on local carer support groups

- **Respite care** - usually for a week or two, at local residential care unit

### **Other HSE Services**

- **Physiotherapy services** – to look at the needs of the person and to provide services and advice to improve the persons condition, prevent future problems and enhance activity and mobility
- **Occupational therapy** – to provide advice on technical aids and appliances, adaptations to your home and various forms of rehabilitation to improve the person’s daily living skills.
- **Chiropody**- it is important to keep feet as healthy as possible. Factors include cleanliness, nail care, suitable footwear, effects of cold and heat and proper treatment of conditions e.g. corns
- **Speech and language therapy** to assess, diagnose and treat disorders affecting the person’s communication capacity. Many illnesses and disabilities severely disrupt communication including hearing disabilities, strokes, head injury and tongue cancer
- **Psychological services** –assessment, family counselling and stress management
- **Social workers** – hospital and community-based to provide personal advice and support

**To contact your local Public Health Nurse you can call your local health office (for contact details see Appendix A) or visit [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)**

### **Home Support Service**

The Home Support Service (previously known as a Home Care Package) is a set of services provided by the HSE to help an older person to be cared for in their own home. The services might be needed due to illness, disability, or after a stay in hospital or following rehabilitation in a nursing home. This service includes extra services and supports that are over and above the normal community services that the HSE provides directly or through a HSE-funded service.

#### **Who can apply?**

The vast majority of people who apply will be aged over 65 and may be already using some HSE community services. However, people under 65 may also be considered eligible for additional home support.

The Home Support Service is not means-tested nor does a person need to have a medical card. The supports received will be based on a care needs assessment of the individual and on the resources available for the scheme in the local health office area.

## Care needs assessment

This is an assessment of the overall health needs of the individual applying for the home support service. This is carried out by a health professional identified by the HSE, in many cases, a public health nurse or social worker. Factors for assessment include:

- Ability to carry out activities of daily living – e.g. bathing, dressing, shopping and moving around
- Social circumstances – family, social and community supports
- The assessment may also include a physical examination by a healthcare professional
- Wishes and preferences of the individual as well as level of dependency are also taken into account.

## How to apply

Application forms can be accessed by contacting the Public Health Nurse, visiting your local health office or downloading the form from the HSE website [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie). Completed applications can be returned to the Home Support Office. Addresses of local health offices are at back of this document – see Appendix A

## Carer's Emergency Card

Carry the [Carer's Emergency Card](#) so that in case you have an accident or take ill, the details on the card can be used to make sure the person you care for is looked after. You can access this card on the HSE website at:

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/3/carerssupport/card.jpg>

## Young Carers

'Young Carers are children and young people aged under 18 with caring responsibilities who generally provide care for their immediate family such as parents, siblings or grandparents.'

If you are a young carer talk to the health professional who cares for your relative, or tell your teacher or a trusted family friend. It's important for you to get support to help you have fun, continue your schooling and care for your relative. For support and information on activities, social networking and meeting other young carers safely, contact Young Carers on 1800 24 07 24 or [www.youngcarers.ie](http://www.youngcarers.ie)

## HSELive – (Callsave) 1850 24 1850 or (041) 685 0300

The Health Service Executive provides a National Information Service, HSELive to answer questions about health services, your entitlements, or how to access HSE health or social services in your area. The service can provide confidential information on a wide range of queries, like:

- Medical Cards
- GP Visit Cards
- European Health Insurance Card
- Drugs Payment Scheme
- Long-Term Illness Scheme
- Home Help Services
- Nursing Home Subvention
- Health Promotion Literature

HSELive can also advise on

- health services,
- entitlements,
- eligibility,
- application forms
- contact details for services across the country.

Information can also be accessed by email or fax, and it also offers a Live Chat facility.

**HSELive is open from 8.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 5pm Saturdays.**

**Callsave: 1850 24 1850 or (041) 685 0300 Email: [hselive@hse.ie](mailto:hselive@hse.ie) Twitter: @hselive**

## Financial Supports

### Carer's Allowance or Half-rate Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is administered by the Department of Social Protection to people who are looking after someone who is in need of support because of age, physical or learning disability or illness, including mental illness.

Carer's Allowance is a means-tested payment. It is mainly aimed at carers on low incomes who usually live with and look after certain people who need full-time care and attention. If you are caring for more than one person you may be entitled to an additional 50% of the maximum rate of Carer's Allowance.

In September 2007, a Half-rate Carer's Allowance was introduced. This allows people who qualify for certain social welfare payments who are providing full time care to keep that payment and qualify for a half-rate Carer's Allowance. Carer's Allowance is not taken into account in the assessment for a medical card.

If you qualify for Carer's Allowance you may also qualify for [free household benefits](#) (if you are living with the person you are caring for) and a [Free Travel Pass](#).

## **Carer's Benefit**

Carers Benefit is a payment made to people who are insured under the Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) system who leave the workforce to care for a person or people in need of full time care. Many of the conditions for payment of Carer's Benefit are the same as for Carer's Allowance. However, you must have been employed for at least 8 weeks, whether consecutive or not, in the previous 26 week period. You must be in employment for a minimum of 16 hours per week or 32 hours per fortnight. You also must meet the PRSI contribution conditions to be eligible for the payment.

Carer's Benefit can be paid for a total period of 104 weeks for each person being cared for. This may be claimed as a single continuous period or in any number of separate periods up to a total of 104 weeks. However, if you claim Carer's Benefit for less than six consecutive weeks in any given period you must wait for a further six weeks before you can claim Carer's Benefit to care for the same person again.

## **Carer's Leave**

The Carers Leave Act 2001 allows employees to leave their employment temporarily to provide full time care for someone in need of full time care and attention. Carer's leave from employment is unpaid, but the Carer's Leave Act ensures that those who propose to avail of carers leave will have their jobs kept open for them for the duration of the leave. A Carer may qualify for either Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance during this period.

## **Carer's Support Grant (formerly called Respite Care Grant)**

The Carer's Support Grant is an annual payment made to carers by the Department of Social Protection. It was formerly called the Respite Care Grant. 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. The Carer's Support Grant of €1,700 (June 2020) is paid once each year, usually on the first Thursday in June, for each person you are caring for. It is not taxable.

You can apply for a Carer's Support Grant for any given year from April of that year until 31 December of the following year. So, for example, you can apply for a grant for 2019 at any time from April 2020 up until 31 December 2021.

The grant is paid automatically by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) to people getting Carer's Allowance (whether full-rate or half-rate), Carer's Benefit or Domiciliary Care Allowance. Only one Carer's Support Grant can be paid for each person getting care.

You will not qualify if you work outside the home for more than 18.5 hours per week or if you are in receipt of an unemployment payment or signing on for unemployment credits.

## Supplementary Welfare Allowance

Supplementary Welfare Allowance is administered by Community Welfare Officers in the HSE on behalf of the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection. People with low incomes may qualify for an exceptional needs payment which is a single payment to help meet essential, once off, exceptional costs which the person could not reasonably be expected to meet out of their weekly income. For example, the payments can be made for special clothing for a person who has a serious illness, or costs in relation to funerals.

If you have claimed a social welfare benefit or pension but it has not yet been paid and you have no other income, you may qualify for basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance while you are waiting for your payment. However, the amount paid while you are waiting will be deducted from the arrears of your social welfare payment.

## Tax credits and reliefs for carers

**Home Carer's Tax Credit:** A Home Carers Tax Credit is a tax credit of up to €1,600 (June 2020) given to married couples or civil partners who are jointly assessed for tax where one spouse or civil partner works in the home caring for a dependent person.

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

**For further information on Carer Payments and for the application forms, you can contact the Citizens Information Board on Locall 0761 074000, or go to [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)**

## Medical Cards

Medical cards are issued by the HSE and allow people to access a Family Doctor or GP services, community health services, dental services, hospital care, and a range of other benefits **free of charge**.

There are now 2 medical card application processes:

- One ([Form MC1A](#)) for people aged over 70 whose income is BELOW the €500 (single) and €900 (couple) income limit.
- One ([Form MC1](#)) for those aged 18-69, and people aged over 70 whose income is above the limit for a Medical Card/GP Visit Card.

It was announced in Budget 2020 that the medical card weekly income limit for people over 70 will be increased by €50 for a single person (to €550 from €500) and by €150 for a couple (to €1,050 from €900) from July 2020.

If you are over 70, and believe your income may be above the limits, you may still apply to the HSE for a Medical Card under the General Medical Card / GP Visit Card scheme, on the basis that your health circumstances cause undue financial hardship. The General application form MC1 is the appropriate form to complete in this instance.

You can qualify for a Medical Card under the following three main categories:

- **Means Test:** Single People or Families who have an income that is within certain financial guidelines. You can read more about the Medical Card/GP Visit Card Income Guidelines below.
- **Undue Hardship:** People whose income is over the financial guidelines, but the HSE decides that the financial burden of medical or other exceptional circumstances would cause undue hardship.
- **Automatic:** People who are automatically entitled to a Medical Card are:  
Those with European Union entitlement.  
Those who are entitled to retain their Medical Card under government schemes.

You are entitled to the following services if you have a Medical Card:

- **Doctor Visits:** a range of family doctor or GP services from a chosen doctor contracted to the HSE in your local area
- **Prescription Medicines:** The supply of prescribed approved medicines, aids and appliances like wheelchairs, crutches etc. In some circumstances a deposit may be required for aids and appliances which will be refunded on return of the aid or appliance. A €2.00 charge for each item applies to all prescription medicines dispensed to medical card patients subject to a maximum of €20 a month for an individual or a family. For people over the age of 70 the charge is reduced to €1.50 per item up to a maximum of €15 per month per family.
- **Hospital Care:** all in-patient services in public wards in public hospitals, including public consultant services
- **Hospital Visits:** All out-patient services in public hospitals, including public consultant services
- Certain Dental, Ophthalmic (Eye), and Aural (Ear) health services
- Some personal and social care services, for example, public health nursing, social work services, and other community care services based on client need

## GP Visit Cards

If you are over 70 and if your weekly income is below €700 (single person) or €1,400 (married or cohabiting couple) you may qualify for a GP Visit Card. The Application Form for this is Form MC1A (same as Medical Card Application Form for over 70's).

**For more information about income guidelines and to access the forms needed to apply you can contact the Citizens Information Service on Locall 0761 074000, go to**

[www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie), your local HSE office, visit [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) or [www.medicalcard.ie](http://www.medicalcard.ie)

## Drug Payment Scheme

Under the Drugs Payment Scheme you pay a maximum of €124 a month (In Budget 2020, it was announced that the monthly maximum will reduce to €114 from September 2020) for approved prescribed drugs, medicines and certain appliances for use by yourself and your family in that month. In order to qualify for this scheme, you must be ordinarily resident in Ireland.

The scheme covers the person who applied, his or her spouse/partner, and children under 18 years or under 23 if in full-time education. A dependant with a physical or mental disability/illness living in the household who does not have a Medical Card and who is unable to fully maintain himself/herself, may be included in the family expenditure regardless of age.

(If you hold a medical card you are already entitled to free medicines and so this scheme is not available to you.)

**For more information contact the Citizens Information Service at Locall 0761 074000, go to [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie) ) or visit your local HSE office.**

## Nursing Home Support Scheme

The Nursing Home Support Scheme is a scheme of financial support for people who need long term nursing care. The scheme will apply to both public and private nursing home places. Under the scheme, every person who needs long term care will make a contribution to the cost of their care and this contribution will be based on their means.

Broadly, the scheme has three steps:

1. A Care Needs Assessment;  
This assessment will consider whether a person can be supported to continue living at home or whether long-term nursing home care is more appropriate. It is carried out by a health professional and overall health needs, social circumstances, level of dependency and wishes and preferences of the individual are taken into account. A physical examination may also be carried out. The individual must be assessed as needing nursing home care in order to be eligible for either State Support or the Nursing Home Loan.



2. A Financial Assessment;  
The Financial Assessment looks at income and assets in order to work out what the contribution to care will be. The HSE will then pay the balance of your cost of care.
3. An option for a Nursing Home Loan.  
This is effectively a loan advanced by the State which can be repaid at any time but will ultimately fall due for repayment upon death. Its purpose is to ensure that assets such as a house don't have to be sold during a person's lifetime. The legal term for the Nursing Home Loan is "Ancillary State Support".

Your local Nursing Home Support Office will provide the application form, answer any queries about the scheme, help complete the application form if needed and provide a list of approved nursing homes for your area. See Appendix B for contact details of your local Nursing Home Support Office. You can also contact your local HSE office the HSE information line at 1850 24 1850 or visit [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie).

If you would like information on choosing a nursing home, you can contact The Alzheimer Society helpline at 1800 341 341 who can talk to you about your situation and send you the Society's *Guidelines for Choosing a Nursing Home* document.

## **Money Advise Budgeting Service (MABS)**

MABS is a free and confidential service for people in Ireland with debt problems and money management problems. There are 60 MABS offices in Ireland, staffed by trained Money Advisers who can help you deal with your debts and make out a budget.

Money advisers can examine your income to make sure you are not missing out on any of your entitlements, contact your creditors on your behalf with offers of payment if you are not able to do it yourself and help you decide on the best way to make the payments.

For more information on this service visit: [www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie), call their helpline at 0761 07 2000 (9am – 8pm Monday – Friday) or email [helpline@mabs.ie](mailto:helpline@mabs.ie)

## **Other Supports for Carers**

People with dementia will need help from other people at some point. In most cases family members meet this need. Becoming a family carer often involves making major changes and taking on a lot of responsibility. Carers can feel isolated, emotionally drained and worn out. It is important to know that you are not alone and that family carers themselves need help too.

There are a number of voluntary organisations providing information, advice and support for carers in Ireland – see below for contact details. Support groups for carers provide a place to meet others, access information and share experiences in a safe and supportive environment. These groups are run by the HSE and other voluntary agencies, such as the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Family Carers Ireland.

Education and training can also help family carers to learn about dementia and to feel confident and supported in their role as a Carer. The HSE and voluntary agencies including Family Carers Ireland and The Alzheimer Society of Ireland can provide training for carers. Additionally The Alzheimer Society of Ireland provides a booklet entitled '*Living with Dementia – An Introduction for Family Carers*' and a range of other information resources through the National Helpline Service. These publications can also be downloaded on our website at <http://www.alzheimer.ie/>

For more information on support groups and training for carers, contact your local health office, call the HSE Infoline at 1850 24 1850 or 041 685 0300 or contact the Alzheimer National Helpline at 1800 341 341 or email [helpline@alzheimer.ie](mailto:helpline@alzheimer.ie)

### List of organizations for carers

Alzheimer Society of Ireland	<a href="http://www.alzheimer.ie">www.alzheimer.ie</a>	Helpline Freephone 1800 341 341
Family Carers Ireland	<a href="http://www.familycarers.ie">www.familycarers.ie</a>	Freephone 1800 24 07 24
Health Service Executive	<a href="http://www.hse.ie">www.hse.ie</a>	Callsave 1850 24 1850

### Other useful organizations when caring for someone with dementia

[www.dementia.ie](http://www.dementia.ie) Website of the **Dementia Services Information and Development Centre** (DSIDC) in St James Hospital, Dublin. Provides information on dementia and publications for carers to download. Tel: 01 4162035

[www.atdementia.org.uk](http://www.atdementia.org.uk) **Atdementia** is a UK based website that provides information about safety equipment and technology specifically for people with dementia. Contains a directory of suppliers. Tel: 0044 115 7484220

<http://www.dementiacircle.org> **Dementia Circle**: This project is funded by The Alzheimer Society in Scotland. People with dementia and their families identify and develop products that will help people with dementia stay independent for longer in their own homes.

[www.aoti.ie](http://www.aoti.ie) **Occupational Therapist's Association** Tel: 01 8748136

[www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie) The **Citizens Information Board** provides comprehensive information on public services and on the entitlements of citizens in Ireland. Information is gathered from various government departments and agencies, and is presented in an easy-to-understand way. Locall 0761 074000

[www.flac.ie](http://www.flac.ie) **FLAC - Free legal Advice Centres** around Ireland Tel: 1890 350 250 or 01 8745690

[www.legalaidboard.ie](http://www.legalaidboard.ie) **The Legal Aid Board** provides legal aid and advice on matters of civil law to persons unable to fund such services from their own resources Tel: 1890 615200

[www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) Website of the **Department of Social Protection** Provides information on schemes, services and social entitlements.

[www.iacp.ie](http://www.iacp.ie) **Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy** Has a full list of accredited counsellors around Ireland Tel: 01 230 03536

## Appendix A

### List of HSE Local Health Offices around Ireland

Your Local Health Office is your entry point to community health and personal social services. The wide range of services that are provided through Local Health Offices and from Health Centres include general practitioner services, public health nursing, child health services, community welfare, chiropody, ophthalmic, speech therapy, social work, addiction counselling and treatment, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychiatric services and home help. You will find below a list of Local Health offices by county:

**Cavan:** Cavan Local Office, Lisdaran, Co. Cavan Tel (049) 4361822

**Carlow:** Primary Care Centre, Shamrock Plaze, Green Lane, Carlow Tel: (076) 1082000

**Clare:** Sandfield Centre, Ennis, Co. Clare Tel: (065) 6868054 / 8077

**Cork:**

*North Lee:* Local Health Office, St. Finbarr's Hospital, Douglas Rd. Cork. Tel: (021) 496 6555

*South Lee:* Local Health Office, St. Finbarr's Hospital, Douglas Rd. Cork. Tel: (021) 496 5511

*North Cork:* Floor 2, Mallow Primary Healthcare Centre, Mallow Tel: 022 58700

*West Cork:* Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co. Cork. Tel: (028) 40400

**Donegal:** LHO, St. Joseph's Hospital, Stranorlar, Co. Donegal. Tel: (074) 9131391

**Dublin:**

*North Dublin:* Cromcastle Road, Coolock, Dublin 5. Tel: (01) 816 4200

*Dublin North Central:* Civic Centre, Ballymun, Dublin 11. *Tel: (01) 846 7000*

*Dublin North West:* Ground Floor, Unit 4&5, Nexus Building, Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park. Dublin 15. *Tel: (01) 897 5101*

*Dublin South City:* City Lodge, Old Meath Hospital Heytesbury St. Dublin 8.  
*Tel: (076) 695 5000*

*Dublin South East:* Vergemount Hall, Clonskeagh, Dublin 6 *Tel: (01) 268 0300*

*Dublin South West:* Old County Road Health Centre, Crumlin, Dublin 12. *Tel: (01) 415 4700*

*Dublin West:* Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10. *Tel: (076) 695 5000 / 01 6206000*

*Dun Laoghaire:* Tivoli Road, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. *Tel: (01) 284 3579 / (01) 236 5200*

**Galway:** Local Health Office, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway. *Tel: (091) 523 122*

**Kerry:**

HSE South, Rathass, Tralee, Co. Kerry. *Tel: (066) 718 4500*

19 Denny Street, Tralee. *Tel: (066) 718 4500*

24 Denny Street, Tralee. *Tel: (066) 718 4571 (066) 718 4500*

**Kildare/West Wicklow:** St. Mary's, Craddockstown Road, Naas. (Adjacent to Naas General Hospital). *Tel: (045) 920 000*

**Kilkenny:** Kilkenny Community Care, James's Green, Kilkenny *Tel: (056) 7784600*

**Laois:** Community Services, Dublin Road, Portlaoise. *Tel: (057) 862 1135*

**Leitrim:** Leitrim Road, Carrick-on-Shannon. *Tel: (071) 965 0300*

**Limerick:** Ballycummin Avenue, Raheen Business Park Limerick. *Tel: (061) 483719*

**Longford:** Local Health Office, Health Centre, Mullingar. *Tel: (044) 93 95111*

**Louth:** Louth Local Health Office, Dublin Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth. *Tel: (042) 933 2287*

**Mayo:** Westport Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. *Tel: (094) 902 2333*

**Meath:** Meath Community Services, County Clinic, Navan, Co. Meath. *Tel: (046) 902 1595*

**Monaghan:** Monaghan PCCC Office, Saint Davnet's Hospital Complex, Rooskey, Monaghan  
*Tel (047) 30400*

**Offaly:** Community Services, Arden Road, Tullamore. *Tel: (057) 934 1301*

**Roscommon:** Roscommon LHO, HSE West, Government Buildings, Convent Road,  
Roscommon. *Tel: (090) 663 7500*

**Sligo:** Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo. *Tel: (071) 915 5100*

**Tipperary:**

*Tipperary South:* LHO, HSE St. Luke's Hospital, Clonmel. Tel: (052) 61 77000

*Tipperary North /East Limerick:* Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh. Tel: 067 46400

**Waterford:** Waterford Local Health Office, Cork Road, Waterford. Tel: 051-842800

**Westmeath:** Local Health Office, Health Centre, Longford Road, Mullingar.

Tel: (044) 93 95111

**Wexford:** Wexford Local Health Office, Georges St, Wexford. Tel: (053) 912 3522

**Wicklow:** Glenside Road, Wicklow Town. Tel: (0404) 68 400

**Information is also available from the HSELive on 1850 24 1850, Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm and Saturdays 10am to 5pm.**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland has taken great care to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this booklet. The Society is not liable for any inaccuracies, errors, omissions or misleading information. If you would like to discuss or comment on the information in this document, please contact the Alzheimer National Helpline Service at 1800 341 341 or email [helpline@alzheimer.ie](mailto:helpline@alzheimer.ie). The Helpline is open to calls Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm and Saturdays 10am-4pm. You can also leave a message with your contact details and we will return your call.

**The Helpline is a free and confidential information and support service.**



Alzheimer National Helpline  
**FREEPHONE 1800 341 341**  
[helpline@alzheimer.ie](mailto:helpline@alzheimer.ie)