

The One-Parent Family Payment

The One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) is available to women and men under the age of 66 who are raising their child(ren) without the support of a partner. You can be in employment and receive OFP, if you meet the criteria, as it is a means tested payment.

To qualify for a One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) you must:

- Be aged under 66
- Be a parent, step parent, adoptive parent or legal guardian of the child
- Your youngest child must be under 7 years old (there are two exceptions*)
- You must be the main carer of the child, and they must live with you
(Important – OFP is *not* payable if the parents have joint equal custody of the child)
- You cannot be living with a spouse, civil partner or cohabitant
- Your earnings from cannot exceed €425 per week
- You must satisfy a means test and be habitually resident in Ireland

If you are living with a partner and are not married and the relationship ends, then you can apply for the payment once you are living apart.

If you are married or in a civil partnership and the relationships ends then under these circumstances you are required to;

- Be living separate from your spouse or civil partner for a minimum of 3 months.
- It is expected that you have made genuine efforts to get maintenance from your spouse or civil partner.
- You must be inadequately maintained by your spouse or civil partner.

Where you are **not** married to the other parent of your child it is not a requirement to seek maintenance from them in order to apply for the OFP. However, once it has been awarded then you may be required to seek maintenance from your child's other parent in order to continue to be eligible for the payment. The staff of the Department will talk with you about this.

There are circumstances in which a person may be eligible for the One-Parent Family Payment when their youngest child is over the age of 7.

- If you are receiving a Domiciliary Care Allowance** for your child then you may be entitled to a half rate of Carers Allowance and the OFP*.
- If you are parenting alone, following the death of your spouse or civil partner, then you may be eligible for the OFP for up to two years from the date of death, as a new applicant, providing your youngest child is aged under 18 years*.

One-Parent Family Payment and employment

You can work outside the home and receive the One-Parent Family Payment. The rate of payment will be based on your weekly means from your earnings.

There is an income disregard for the first €110 of your gross weekly earnings. This means you are entitled to earn up to €110 a week and may still qualify for the full OFP.

Half of the remaining amount of your gross weekly earnings, up to €425 per week, is assessed as means. If you earn between €110 and €425 you could be eligible for a part payment of OFP.

One-Parent Family Payment and maintenance

Maintenance paid by the other parent of your child (ren) is assessed as means. If you receive maintenance for yourself and your child (ren) then both are taken into account. If you are receiving maintenance from more than one person the total of these payments will be considered in the assessment. Half of maintenance is taken into account in assessing the rate of your OFP payment.

A further €95.23 of the maintenance payment, per week can be off set against your housing costs such as rent or mortgage repayment. Half of the remainder of the balance will then be assessed as means. Proof of rent and mortgage payments will be requested.

If you are working and receiving maintenance then the incomes are assessed separately, as above and then the means from each are added together to determine the rate of OFP.

- **Domestic violence and seeking maintenance**

Where there has been domestic violence and abuse in a relationship then it may not be safe for a person to seek maintenance if they are worried that to do so would risk further threats or violence.

If you are applying for OFP because you have left a violent and abusive relationship or, if the parent of your child(ren) has been or is being abusive or violent to you, then it is really important that you disclose any domestic abuse experiences or concerns you have to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) staff.

Your safety and that of your children are of paramount importance. If you consider that it would not be safe for you to seek maintenance from the other parent of your child(ren) you should inform DEASP staff. Part of the application process usually involves a visit to your home or an appointment with a Social Welfare Inspector and this is an opportunity to share your concerns.

A one parent family with a youngest child over 7 years of age

When your child turns 7, you will have to apply for a new payment as your OFP payment will come to an end. If you are not in employment then you can apply for the Jobseeker's transition payment**. With this payment you do not need to be available for or genuinely seeking work, this is to allow you to take care of your children however you will be expected to meet with the Department from time to time, at their request to consider what options may be available to you, in order to plan for work in the future.

The full OFP and Jobseekers transition payment is the same rate and you can also work part time. The means test is the same as for OFP, in that the first €110 of your earnings from work is not counted.

If you are in employment then you may apply for the Jobseeker's transition payment or the Family Income Supplement** (if your hours of employment are a minimum of 38 hours in a fortnight).

Additional information

You will find further information on Jobseeker's transition payment, Family Income Supplement and Domiciliary Care Allowance under **Money and Housing.

Applications for OFP are made in your local Intreo Centre.