

One Parent Family Payment and Maintenance

Income from maintenance and the One-Parent Family Payment

The One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) is a means-tested payment, so any income you receive from work, property (excluding the family home), or any other source – including maintenance payments from an ex-spouse, civil partner or co-habitant - will be factored into the rate of payment you receive.

Requirement to pay maintenance

There is a legal responsibility on parents, whether they married or unmarried, to maintain their dependent children, and on spouses/civil partners to maintain each other in accordance with their means. Child maintenance must be paid until the child is 18, or until the child is 23 if he or she is enrolled in full-time education.

When you apply for the OFP you will be asked if you are receiving maintenance and what amount. If you are not receiving maintenance you will be asked to contact the child's other parent to arrange for maintenance to be paid, you will also be asked to provide their contact information. In situations where domestic abuse was or continues to be an issue, you should not be asked to contact the other parent yourself.

What maintenance income is assessed as means?

All income from maintenance is assessed as means - maintenance paid for both you and the children will be taken into account. If you are receiving maintenance from more than one person, the total amount of all maintenance will be taken into account in assessing your means. Half of the total will be deducted from your One-Parent Family Payment.

If you have housing costs such as rent or mortgage payments, a total of €95.23 per week can be off-set against those costs. It is "disregarded" as means, which means that this amount is taken away from the total maintenance you receive, and half of the remainder is assessed as means and deducted from your OFP. Proof of rent and mortgage payments will be required.

Contact information for the other parent

You are asked to provide the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) with contact information for the child's other parent because if you are not receiving maintenance the Department may contact the other parent to seek a contribution towards your OFP. They can also seek to have the contribution increased if they think it is not sufficient. This will be done through the Department's Maintenance Recovery Unit.

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The Department's Maintenance Recovery Unit

The Department has a section called the Maintenance Recovery Unit. This unit is responsible for pursuing maintenance payments. It is important to note that the Department makes the decision to seek additional maintenance and NOT the individual who is in receipt of the payment. You can contact this unit of the Department directly at 071 967 2599.