

One-Parent Family Payment

The One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) is a means-tested payment available to women and men under the age of 66 who are raising their child or children without the support of a partner. The payment is made by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), formerly the Department of Social Welfare. You can be in employment and receive OFP, if you meet the criteria. You can earn a certain amount without it affecting the payment (currently €165 weekly gross), and after that amount you can receive a reduced payment up to a set limit.

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;
- Have a child aged 7 years or younger (there are two exceptions*);
- 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);
- Satisfy a means test, and
- Be habitually resident in Ireland.

You will not qualify if:

- You are living with a spouse, civil partner or cohabitant
- Your earnings exceed €425 per week (gross pay)

If you were living with a partner, *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 relationship ends you are required to:

- Be living separately from your spouse or civil partner for a minimum of 3 months, and
- Have made genuine efforts to get maintenance from 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 the payment has been awarded, you must seek maintenance from the other parent in order to continue to be eligible. The staff of the Department will talk with you about this. There are special provisions in cases of domestic abuse – see below.

Circumstances where you might be eligible with youngest child over 7

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, provided your youngest child is under 18 years.

Your local DEASP or INTREO office would be able to tell you if either of these apply in your particular case.

One-Parent Family Payment and employment

You can be in employment 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 €165 of your gross weekly earnings. This means you can earn up to €165 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 €165 and €425 you could be eligible for a part payment of OFP. Above €425 you will not be eligible for the payment.

One-Parent Family Payment and maintenance

Maintenance paid by the other parent of your child or children is assessed as means. If you receive maintenance for yourself and your children 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 received is taken into account in assessing the rate of your OFP payment.

Ninety five euro and 53 cent (€95.23) of maintenance received (per week) can be offset against your housing costs such as rent or mortgage repayment if you have such costs. 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 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 an abusive relationship, or if the parent of your child or children has been, or is being, abusive or violent to you, then it is really important that you disclose this abuse or any concerns you have about your safety and that of your children, to the staff at the DEASP. 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 youngest 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 (JST). This is a payment for lone parents whose youngest child is between 7 and 13 years.

With this payment you do not need to be available for full-time work, or genuinely seeking work if you are caring for 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. You may also be required to take recommended courses of education or training.

The full OFP and Jobseekers transition payment is the same rate and you can also work. The means test is the same as for OFP, in that the first €165 of your earnings from work is not counted.

One Parent Family Rates of Payment

The current full rate of payment for 2019 (commenced March 2019) is:

One - Parent Family Payment	2020 rates
Personal rate under 66	€203
Child Dependant (aged under 12yrs)	€34
Child Dependant (aged over 12 yrs)	€37

Additional information

You will find further information on Jobseeker's transition payment, Working Family Payment and Domiciliary Care Allowance on the One Family Website.

Applications for OFP are made in your local Intreo Centre.