

FLAC Sheet: Rent Supplement

If you are struggling to pay your rent as a result of Covid-19, you may be entitled to some financial support from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection called 'Rent Supplement.'

What is Rent Supplement?

Rent Supplement is a means tested payment that some people may get if they live in private rented accommodation and cannot pay their rent from their own resources. It is a short-term payment, and only available if you are renting from a private landlord.

Have the rules for who can get Rent Supplement changed?

Yes. Along with legislation that prevents the termination of residential tenancies and increases to rent during the Covid-19 restricted period as set out in legislation, there have been some *temporary* changes to the qualifying criteria for Rent Supplement. The new criteria will remain in force until **August 31st 2020**.

Please check with DEASP for the latest information after this date.

Do I qualify?

The new rules for applicants for Rent Supplement after 13 March 2020 provide that you can qualify if;

- You or your partner are working more than 30 hours per week and have had a reduction in income as a result of Covid-19.
- You have been in your current tenancy for more than 4 weeks and could have continued to pay your rent if Covid-19 had not happened.
- You have been diagnosed with Covid-19 or are suspected of having Covid-19 and are required to self-isolate

[This payment is means tested](#). You will be assessed for Rent Supplement using a higher Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate. You must also be [habitually resident](#) in Ireland. If you consider that you may have qualified for the payment from 13 March 2020 but you are applying late you should inquire at your local INTREO Centre or Social Welfare office whether the payment can be backdated.

How does the Supplementary Welfare Allowance rate work for Rent Supplement during Covid-19?

Rent Supplement ensures that your income doesn't fall below a minimum level. The basic SWA rate is normally €201, with a higher rate if you have a dependent partner or children. If you are a new Rent Supplement Applicant on or after 13 March, you will be assessed for Rent Supplement using the following SWA rates:

- €350 for a single person
- €700 for a couple
- €40 for each child

Can I receive a Rent Supplement payment that will cover the entire amount of my rent?

No. Once the amount you qualify for has been worked out, it will be reduced by €30. You must pay at least €30 per week towards your rent, if you are single and €40 per week if you are part of a couple living together. You may pay more than €30 depending on your income. Any non-dependent household members who are solely dependent on a social welfare payment must also contribute €30. The €30 contribution may not apply where a non-dependent in receipt of a social welfare payment has had “benefit and privilege” assessed against the applicant's payment. This is likely to arise where a person under 25 is in receipt of a social welfare payment and they have been assessed on their parents' income.

A couple over 65 with an income equal to or less than the State Pension (Contributory) will be required to pay €40 towards their rent. If a couple both have the State Pensions (Contributory) and no other income will still pay €40 a week towards rent.

So what happens after August 31st?

If your Rent Supplement continues after 31st August 2020, subject to any further changes at that time, it will be reviewed and the old Rent Supplement rules, guidelines and means assessment will apply. In these cases, you must have;

- been in receipt of Rent Supplement in the 12 months before the date of your application
- been living in private rented accommodation for at least 6 months (183 days) of the last 12 months
- been able to afford the rent in the beginning of your tenancy and are unable to continue to pay due to a substantial change in your circumstances that occurred after you started renting.

You must also be working less than 30 hours per week. If you are living with your partner and only one of you is working full time, both are excluded from receiving rent supplement. Though there are some exceptions where a person is in receipt of Back to Work Enterprise Allowance.

How can I apply for Rent Supplement?

You can apply by filling out [this form](#).

My application was refused, can I appeal?

If you are not satisfied with a decision on your Rent Supplement application, you can appeal this to the Social Welfare Appeals Office within 21 days of receiving a decision.

I need some more guidance on the appeals process. Where can I get more information?

You can contact the FLAC telephone and information line on 1850 350 250.