

Government Updates

Minister Heather Humphries, TD, has secured approval for a number of extensions to schemes and legislative provisions.

Extension of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment

Social Protection Minister, Heather Humphreys TD, secured Government approval to keep the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) open to new applicants until **March 31, 2021**.

The Pandemic Unemployment Payment is a social welfare payment for employees and self-employed people who have lost all their employment due to the Covid-19 public health emergency.

Employees, self-employed people, workers applying for international protection (including those in direct provision), students and part-time workers are eligible to apply for the PUP payment where they have lost their job or have been laid off because of Covid-19.

Other criteria relevant to an application for the payment include:

- Aged between 18 and 66
- Reside in the Republic of Ireland
- Have been in employment or self-employment in Ireland on or after 13 March 2020
- Be genuinely seeking work
- Not be getting any income from employment
- Have at least one PRSI contribution in the 4 weeks before claiming PUP or be in insurable self-employment.

Extension of Suspension of Redundancy Provisions

It has been confirmed that the suspension of redundancy provisions relating to temporary lay-off and short-time work, which arose as a result of the current health crisis, will be extended until **March 31, 2021**.

Section 29 of the Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (Covid-19) Act 2020 temporarily reduced the scope of the operation of the Redundancy Payments Act 1967 by the addition of Section 12A to the Redundancy Payments Act.

The insertion of Section 12A temporarily suspended the provisions in the Redundancy Payments Act which permitted those on a period of layoff or short time, (for 4 weeks or more, or for 6 weeks in the last 13 weeks), to give notice of their intention to claim for redundancy from their Employer.

It is important to note that an Employee's right to claim redundancy has not been removed but rather deferred for the emergency period in circumstances of temporary lay-off or short-time

employment. Employees who remain on lay-off or short-time work for the requisite period when this emergency measure expires will be entitled to exercise their right to claim redundancy from their employer.

All other redundancy provisions remain unchanged and in force. If an employer is going to make an employee redundant, protections such as notice periods for redundancy and the payment of a redundancy lump-sum to the affected employee still apply and the existing suite of employment rights legislation remains in place.

Extension of the waiver on waiting days for jobseeker's payments

Minister Humphreys also secured Government approval to extend the waiver on waiting days for Jobseeker payments until the end of March 2021.

Ordinarily, when a person makes an application for jobseeker's benefit or allowance, payment is not made for the first three days of unemployment – these are called 'waiting days'. These waiting days will continue to be waived on applications for Jobseeker's payments until the end of March 2021.

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