Information Sheet - Benefits, Allowances & Grants

This information is available in the public domain and cannot be construed as professional, technical or legal advice. It is a summary of information from various government websites, standard textbook info and personal accounts and experience. This list is based on our knowledge at the time and is not exhaustive. If you live in Louth or Meath and need support completing application forms or further information please contact our Parent Information Officer on 086 078 7356 or email trish@autismsupportlouth.com

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The following schemes are administered by the Department of Social Protection.

Their telephone number is 01 704 3000. To request an application form go to - https://www.eforms.gov.ie/en/forms/1 Links to application forms are included in the information below.

1.a. Domiciliary Care Allowance:

Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) is a monthly payment for a child aged under 16 with a severe disability, who requires ongoing care and attention, substantially over and above the care and attention usually required by a child of the same age. It is not means tested. The guidelines state that the payment is not based on the type of disability but on the resulting physical or mental impairment which means that the child requires substantially more care and attention than another child of the same age.

To qualify, the child must have a severe disability that is likely to last for at least 1 year and:

- Be aged under 16
- Live at home with the person claiming the allowance for 5 or more days a week
- Meet the medical criteria
- Be ordinarily resident in the State

In addition, the person claiming the allowance for the child must Provide for the care of the child and be habitually resident in the State.

Medical criteria

The legislation states that to qualify for Domiciliary Care Allowance a child must have **"a severe disability requiring continual or continuous care and attention substantially in excess of the care and attention normally required by a child of the same age".**

This means that eligibility for Domiciliary Care Allowance is not based on the type of impairment or disease, but on the resulting lack of function of body or mind which means the child needs extra care and attention. This care and attention must be required to allow the child to deal with the activities of daily living. The child must be likely to require this level of care and attention for at least 12 months. The Department's Medical Assessor looks at all the following before giving an opinion on whether your child meets the medical criteria:

- All medical reports received (your GP fills out a medical report and you should include reports from any relevant specialists)
- Your description of the care and attention required by your child. (The form allows you to state what extra care your child needs under a number of headings.)

Rates - The current Domiciliary Care Allowance rate is €380.00 per month.

How to apply

To apply, fill in a Domiciliary Care Allowance form **DomCare1(**pdf). You can now apply for DCA online via MyWelfare. You will need to be registered with MyGovID to make an online application. If you choose to submit a paper application form, you can get one at your local Intreo centre, social welfare local office or local Citizens Information Service.

Note: If you feel that the your child's care needs while substantial have not perhaps been conveyed as clearly as possible in their diagnostic/professional reports, you are advised to have the medical professional/specialist dealing with your child complete an additional medical form called **DomCare3 (pdf)**. (Please note that completion of this form is optional since medical professionals may have already provided a comprehensive report on your child's medical condition and care needs. However, if you do not have a recent report from your child's treating medical professional, the DomCare3 form can provide useful additional information.)

The completed form will detail your child's conditions, any specific care needs your child might have as a result of their disability and will help the Department's medical assessor to form an opinion on eligibility. Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) refers to a group of disorders characterised by delays in the development of socialisation and communication skills. Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder and Rett's Syndrome are generally referred to under this category.

It is very important that you include all available reports/information in your application. It is advisable to include a daily diary detailing the care you provide for your child over a 24 hour period. This helps to identify that the level of care you are providing is substantially higher than a typical child of similar age.

DCA can be shared between 2 carers (eg. Parents who are separated)

If you qualify for carer's allowance/benefit (see below) you should apply for this at the same time as applying for DCA. Enclose a note with the carer's allowance/benefit application form stating that you have applied for DCA. If your application for DCA is approved, your carer's allowance/benefit will be awarded if you meet the criteria.

If your child gets DCA they are entitled to a full medical card without means test. If you have recently been approved for DCA and your child does not have a medical card you can register for this here – https://www.sspcrs.ie/portal/free-gp-care-dca-web/pub

Link to online applications - https://services.mywelfare.ie/en/topics/caring-for-others/

Links to DCA paper application forms:
https://assets.gov.ie/10305/1744b043a96944af8afc9af0498bd8b8.pdf
https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/10306/3dcf07b69a9244868f43232976408830.pdf#page=null

Reviews and appeals

If your application is refused, you may submit additional information and ask for the decision to be reviewed. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this review or wish to appeal directly without a review, you can appeal to the independent Social Welfare Appeals Office.

For further information click here - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/irishsocialwelfaresystem/social-welfare-appeals/

1.b. Carers Allowance - means tested

Carers Allowance is a payment to people living in Ireland who are looking after someone who is in need of support because of age, physical or learning disability or illness, including mental illness.

Carer's Allowance is not payable to everyone, it is mainly aimed at carers on low incomes who live with and look after certain people who need full-time care and attention. There are rules about who may be entitled to claim Carers Allowance and these rules are set out under 'Rules' below.

If you are providing care to more than one person you may be entitled to an additional 50% of the maximum rate of Carer's Allowance each week.

You will also qualify for the household benefits package which includes a monthly payment of approximately €35 towards gas/electricity, a free TV license and a free travel pass. See link below.

***You may also qualify for a child support payment. Eligibility for full or half rate depends on your specific social welfare payment and your partner's income, if applicable. Currently the Child Support Payment is €29 per child under the age of 12 (half rate – this will increase to €32 in January 2027 and €58 (full rate – this will increase to €64 in January 2027). For children over the age of 12 the Child Support Payment is €39 (half rate – this will increase to €42 in January 2027) and €78 (full rate – this will increase to €84 in January 2027).**

The current income limit disregard is €2000 per week per couple (€1000 per week for a single person). This will increase to €2300 per week per couple in January 2027 (€1150 per week for a single person). The disregard is the weekly amount that will not be included when calculating your carer's allowance. The higher your household income the more reduced your payment will be. Social welfare payments are not included as means. However, it is worth applying even if you are only entitled to a minimum payment as you may also be entitled to a GP visit card, free TV licence, household benefits package worth up to €35 a month and free travel. You may also be entitled to fuel allowance.

To work out your carer's allowance (2026) you can use this calculation - €2000 per couple per week (before tax and USC after PRSI, pension and a travel allowance of €15 euro a week). The figure for a single person is currently €1000 per week.

If you have savings they are assessed as follows: the first €50,000 (per person) is disregarded. For the next €10,000 you lose €1 per thousand. For the next €10,000 it's €2 per thousand. If you have more than €70,000 its €4 euro per thousand.

Carer's Allowance rate is currently €270 per week. This will increase to €280 per week in January 2027.

If you are caring for more than 1 person the current rate is €405. This will increase to €415 per week in January 2027.

To work out your allowance for 2027 increase the couple's disregard to €2,300 and the single person's disregard to €1,150.

Carer's allowance is taxable source of income. It is your responsibility to inform revenue that you are getting carer's benefit. It is very important that you do this to avoid an unexpected tax bill in the future. The best way to do this is via the MyAccount revenue online service.

Please note the difference between Carers Allowance and Carers Benefit – you may be eligible for Carers Benefit (not means tested) but not for Carers Allowance (means tested).

For further information –

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/social-welfare-payments/carers/carers-allowance/

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/social-welfare-payments/extra-social-welfare-benefits/household-benefits-package/

1.c. Carer's Benefit – not means tested

Carer's Benefit is paid to working people who have adequate PRSI contributions who need to take time off work (up to 2 years) and/or reduce hours to provide care. You must have been employed for at least 8 weeks in the previous 26-weeks for a minimum of 16 hours each week or 32 hours a fortnight.
You don't have to meet this rule if you were getting Carer's Benefit in the previous 26 weeks. You can work up to 18.5 hours a week in employment or self-employment and earn up to €1,000 a week (increasing to €1150 in January 2026) after deductions such as PAYE, USC, PRSI, pension levy, union dues, subscriptions to friendly societies and any health insurance contract premium. (See Carer's Leave below).

Carer's Benefit is also available to people who are self-employed.

Alternatively, you can attend an educational training course or do voluntary work for a maximum of 18.5 hours a week.

You can get Carer's Benefit for a total period of 24 months for each person being cared for. This may be claimed as a single continuous period or in separate periods. If you are caring for more than one person, you may receive payment for each care recipient for 24 months. This may result in the care periods overlapping or running concurrently.

You will be awarded PRSI "credits" automatically for the period you are getting Carer's Benefit. Credits are awarded at the same rate as your last paid contribution. These credits help protect your future entitlement to social welfare benefits and pensions. Family Carers claiming Carers Benefit are allowed to work up to **18.5** hours per week and still claim their Allowance.

Carer's Benefit rate is currently €271 if you are caring for 1 person. This will increase to €281 in January 2027. If you are caring for more than 1 person the rate is €406.50. This will increase to €416.50 in January 2027.

You may also qualify for a child support payment. Eligibility for full or half rate depends on your specific social welfare payment and your partner's income, if applicable. Currently the Child Support Payment is €29 per child under the age of 12 (half rate – this will increase to €32 in January 2027 and €58 (full rate – this will increase to €64 in January 2027). For children over the age of 12 the Child Support Payment is €39 (half rate – this will increase to €42 in January 2027) and €78 (full rate – this will increase to €84 in January 2027).

Both parents can avail of carer's leave of 104 weeks per child requiring care (just not at the same time).

Carer's benefit is taxable. It is your responsibility to inform revenue that you are getting carer's benefit. It is very important that you do this to avoid an unexpected tax bill in the future. The best way to do this is via the MyAccount revenue online service.

Please note the difference between Carers Allowance and Carers Benefit – you may be eligible for Carers Benefit (not means tested) but not for Carers Allowance (means tested).

For more information see: https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/socialwelfarepayments/carers/carers-benefit/

Link to application form:
file:///C:/Users/Teacher/Downloads/19923_2847745f86944188b90be0e885bf4a01%20(5).pdf

1.d. Carers Leave – The Carer's Leave Act 2001

If you need to take carer's leave you may be entitled to Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance (see above).

The Carer's Leave Act 2001 complements the Carer's Benefit Scheme in regard to leave. The Act allows employees to leave their employment temporarily for a period up to 24 months to provide full-time care for people in need of full-time care and attention. The leave will be unpaid but the Act ensures that those who propose to avail of Carer's Leave **will have their jobs kept open for them for the duration of the leave**. Eligibility for Carer's Benefit will not be a prerequisite for Carer's Leave entitlement but employees who meet the Department of Social Protection criteria will also be able to apply for Carer's Benefit.

Some of the main provisions of the Carer's Leave Act are:

- There is a minimum service requirement, i.e., an employee is required to have 12 months continuous service with his/her employer in order to be eligible to apply for Carer's Leave.
- An employee may not be on Carer's Leave in respect of two or more relevant persons at any one time. An exception is where the two relevant persons live together. This exception can only be exercised once.
- Employees may not be dismissed because they exercise their right to Carer's Leave.
- In general, Carer's Leave may be taken as a block or in discontinuous periods, subject to a minimum number of weeks and a maximum of 24 months.

  For further information go to:
  https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment-rights-and-conditions/leaveand-holidays/carers-leave/

1.e. Disability Allowance

This is paid to people between 16 and 66 who have a severe disability. The allowance is means-tested. However only the means of the disabled person and their spouse is taken into account and not that of their parents.

The Scheme is administered by Disability Allowance Section, Social Welfare Services Office, Ballinalee Road, Longford LoCall no. 1890927770
To qualify for a Disability Allowance a person must:

- be substantially restricted in undertaking suitable employment arising from a medical assessment or examination of the person's disability
- be aged between 16 and under 66
- satisfy a means test
- be habitually resident in the State.
- be substantially restricted in undertaking suitable employment

The medical criteria which must be satisfied in order to qualify for Disability Allowance are:

a. The person must be suffering from an injury, disease, congenital deformity or physical or mental illness or defect which has continued or may reasonably be expected to continue for a period of at least a year and
b. As a result of the condition the person is substantially restricted in undertaking work which would otherwise be suitable having regard to the person's age, experience and qualifications.

This would mean that the person's capacity to undertake or carry out work would be substantially less than that of a person without the specified Disability in question.

The application form requires claimants to produce certified medical evidence which outlines various aspects of their medical condition. In all cases an assessment is made by Departmental Medical Assessors of the evidence submitted to determine the nature and extent of the disability and its effect on the person's capacity to work.

The weekly personal rate for Disability Allowance is €254. This will increase to €264 in January 2027.

You can get disability allowance even if you are in school. Domiciliary Care Allowances finishes on your child's 16th birthday. It is advised that you apply for Disability Allowance at least 4 months prior to your child's 16th birthday.

You can work and earn up to €165 a week after PAYE, PRSI and union dues without affecting your rate of DA. If you start work you must inform the Department of Social Protection.

If you earn more than €165 a week (this will increase to €175 a week in January 2026), 50% of your earnings between €165 and €375 will not be taken into account in the DA means test. Any earnings over €375 are assessed in full.

Disability allowance is taxable. It is your responsibility to inform revenue that you are getting disability allowance. It is very important that you do this in order to avoid an unexpected tax bill in the future. The best way to do this is via the MyAccount revenue online service.

For further information go to – https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/socialwelfarepayments-and-work/disability-payments-and-work/
Link to application form:
https://assets.gov.ie/37058/cb5b7ad51df64140b7ec346446ef31fb.pdf

1.f. Cost of Disability Payment

A new Cost of Disability Payment will be introduced in 2027. This payment will be available to those in receipt of Disability Allowance. There will be a one off payment of €500 per person. It is expected that this will be paid in the first quarter of 2027.

1.g. One-Parent Family Payment (OFP)

One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) is a payment for men and women under 66 who are bringing children up without the support of a partner. To get this payment you must meet certain conditions and you must satisfy a means test.

To get a One-Parent Family Payment you must have at least one relevant child below 7 years of age but there are exceptions to the age limits.

Domiciliary Care Allowance - If you are getting Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) for a child, you qualify for OFP on behalf of that child if you meet the other conditions. This means that you can apply for or continue to claim OFP until the child reaches 16 or DCA stops.

Carer's Allowance - If you are currently getting OFP and are providing full-time care and attention for one of your children or for an adult (such as a parent or a sibling), you can keep your OFP and also claim half-rate Carer's Allowance, provided that your youngest child is aged under 16 years.

This means that you can claim both OFP and a half-rate Carer's Allowance (CA) until your youngest child turns 16, for as long as you continue to meet the conditions for both schemes. You will also get the Child Support Payment) for any other children in the family until they reach 18 (or 22 if in fulltime education) while CA and OFP are in payment.

Recipients of OPF may also be entitled to Fuel Allowance (see below), Working Family Payment, a medical card or Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).

For further information go to: https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/socialwelfarepayments/families-and-children/one-parent-family-payment/

1.h. Carers Support Grant (CSG):

The Carers Support Grant is an annual payment made to carers by the Department of Social Protection. Carers can use the grant in whatever way they wish. You can use the grant to pay for respite care if you wish, but you do not have to do so.

To qualify for carer's support grant you must be caring for the person for at least 6 months which must include the first Thursday in June. You cannot work as an employee or be self-employed for more than 18.5 hours a week. You cannot take part in education or a training course for more than 18.5 hours a week. CSG is not taxable and is not means tested. It can be backdated to the previous year if you were providing care for at least 6 months including the first Thursday in June. eg. To apply for CSG for 2024 you can apply any time up to 31st December 2025 by completing an application form.

CSG is paid on the first Thursday of June annually. The Department of Social Protection pays the grant automatically to carers getting Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit or Domiciliary Care Allowance from the Department. Only one Respite Care Grant can be paid for each person getting care.

If your child is in receipt of DA and you receive Carers Allowance then you will also receive the CSG automatically.

If your child is in receipt of DA and you do not receive Carers Allowance you need to apply for it separately.

Rate - Currently €2000 per annum paid on the first Thursday of June.

For more information -
https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/socialwelfare/socialwelfarepayments/carers/carers-support-grant/
Link to application form -
https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/46552/3089ce6fa8d74561aad4c57dbdccd7ec.pdf
#p age=null

1.i. Free Travel:

Free travel is automatically awarded to those in receipt of carers allowance and disability allowance. It allows you to use public transport, and a large number of private bus and ferry services, free of charge.

If you qualify for a Free Travel Pass and you are married, in a civil partnership or co-habiting, you may get a Free Travel Pass that allows your spouse or partner to join you for free when travelling. This does not apply if you are a carer under 66 years.

Certain incapacitated people can get a free travel companion pass if they are assessed as unfit to travel alone. This type of pass allows any one person, aged 16 or over, to accompany you for free, when travelling.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/socialwelfare/socialwelfarepayments/extra-social-welfare-benefits/free-travel/

1.j. Supplementary welfare payment (SWA)

If you have applied for a social welfare payment and are awaiting a decision and have no other income, you may be entitled to a supplementary welfare payment in the interim. Child benefit, Domiciliary Carer's Allowance and Carer's Support Grant are not counted as means. However, any amount paid while you are waiting will be deduced from the arrears of your social welfare payment. SWA is not a taxable source of income.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/socialwelfarepayments/supplementary-welfare-schemes/supplementary-welfare-allow/

Link to application form - https://assets.gov.ie/24920/f93565af8bed495a817b8d7fbb18482a.pdf

1.k. Additional Needs Payment (Includes Exceptional needs and Urgent Needs Payment)

The additional needs payment is a payment to help you with essential expenses that you cannot pay from your weekly income or other sources. The additional needs payment does not cover non-essential

household or personal costs, or costs that are the responsibility of another Government department or agency.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/socialwelfare/socialwelfarepayments/supplementary-welfare-schemes/additional-needs-payment/

Link to application form - https://assets.gov.ie/24920/f93565af8bed495a817b8d7fbb18482a.pdf

1.l. Warmer Homes Scheme (SEAI)

This is a scheme to deliver free energy efficiency upgrades to homeowners who receive certain welfare payments. If you are in receipt of Domiciliary Care Allowance or Carers Allowance and live with the person you are caring for (effective from 1st August 2018) you are eligible to apply to the Warmer Homes Scheme. If you are in receipt of Disability Allowance and have a child under 7 years old you are also eligible to apply. Those in receipt of fuel allowance can also apply.

There are a number of home energy improvements offered as part of this scheme. The upgrades that will be recommended for a property will depend on many factors including age, size, type and condition of the property. For each eligible home, the SEAI technical surveyor will determine which upgrades can be installed and funded. The upgrades agreed will be fully funded and may include external wall/cavity insulation, attic insulation, water tank insulation, windows and doors, solar PV panels and battery and in some cases air to water heating systems.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housinggrantsandschemes/warmerhomesscheme/#:~:text=The%20Sustainable%20Energy%20Authority%20of,a s%20the%20Warmer%20 Homes %20Scheme.

Link to online application - https://onlinewhs.powerappsportals.com/dsp-precheck/

1.m. Enhanced Solar PV Grant

This scheme was introduced in October 2026. If you are in receipt of DCA or carers allowance and live with the person you care for you can apply for a grant of up to €8,400 for solar PV panels and €600 towards a home battery system. You must own your own home. This scheme is particularly useful if you have availed of the warmer homes scheme in the past, before solar PV panels were available. It is very important to do your own research and shop around to get the best deal for your home.

For further information - https://www.seai.ie/grants/home-energy-grants/individual-grants/solar-electricity-grant

1.n. Household Benefits Package

The household benefits package helps with the cost of your electricity or gas bill and includes a free TV licence. Only one person in a household can get the package. Those in receipt of Carer's Allowance automatically qualify for the Household Benefits Package.

If you are **NOT IN RECEIPT OF CARERS ALLOWANCE** because of the means test and you are caring for someone in receipt of disability allowance, they can apply for the household benefits package.

The person you are caring for must be over 18 years and you will need to get their name put on the gas/electricity bill as well as your own name (you can only claim for 1 bill). If the electricity company query why you are changing one of the names on the bill, tell them you are full time caring for an adult on disability allowance and they are entitled to the household benefits package because they receive disability allowance.

Wait for your next bill to arrive by post or online, make sure the names have changed, print off copy of the application form and attach the new bill.

You will receive a free TV Licence letter and receive approximately €35 per month (€1.15 per day) towards your electricity or gas bill. This is paid into the claimant's bank account or post office on the first Tuesday of every month. The money has to be paid into the bank account your adult son/daughter if the claim is in their name. If you live in rented accommodation and the bill is in your landlord's name you can still claim the allowance. However, you must be living in self-contained accommodation and your landlord will need to confirm in writing that you are a tenant and are paying your own energy bills.

For further information: https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/socialwelfarepayments/extrasocial-welfare-benefits/household-benefits-package/

Link to application form: https://assets.gov.ie/19988/9590902b20fa4e41badfdabf1bc3cca8.pdf

Or you can apply online at: https://services.mywelfare.ie/en/topics/pensionsandolderpeople/household-benefits/

1.o. Fuel Allowance

Carer's allowance is qualifying payment for fuel allowance (including half rate carer's allowance). Fuel allowance is a payment to help with the cost of heating your home during the Winter months. It is paid to only one person in the household from September to April. The current rate of fuel allowance is €38 per week (increasing to €43 per week in January 2027). You can choose to have this paid weekly or in 2 instalments.
To get fuel allowance you must live alone or with a person who gets Carer's Allowance and who is caring full time for you or for your spouse/partner or cohabitant, or for a child for whom you receive the child support payment on a full-time basis.

You must also satisfy a means test. For a single person under the age of 66, €499.30 is the assessable weekly income limit. If you have savings of more than €20,000.00 this will be included in the assessment of your weekly means.

Income from the following carer-related sources is disregarded for the purpose of calculating entitlement to fuel allowance (i.e. this income will not be included in the assessment of your weekly means)

- Carer's Allowance
- Half rate Carer's Allowance
- Domiciliary Care Allowance
- One Parent Family Payment
- Disability Allowance
- Invalidity Pension

For further information click here: https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/extrasocialwelfare-benefits/fuel-allowance/

Health Service Executive (HSE) – The following schemes are administered by the HSE

2 a. Medical Cards (Low Call 0818 22 44 78)

A medical card entitles you to free GP and hospital care as well as subsidised prescriptions. If your child gets Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) they are entitled to a full medical card without means test. If you have recently been approved for DCA and your child does not have a medical card you register the child online https://www.sspcrs.ie/portal/free-gp-care-dca-web/pub

If you receive carer's allowance you may be entitled to a medical card based on your income. Most people who receive Disability Allowance are generally entitled to a full medical card as their means are usually under the limit.

People who have medical cards pay a reduced universal social charge.

Medical card holders may be entitled to free school transport and free state examination fees. Please note school transport for children with disabilities is free to all.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/health/medical-cards-andgpvisitcards/medical-card/

Online application here - https://www2.hse.ie/services/schemesallowances/medicalcards/applying/apply/

2 b. GP visit card (Lo Call 0818 22 44 78)

A GP visit card entitles you to free GP visits.

All carer's who receive carer's allowance or carer's benefit are entitled to a GP visit card.

If you do not receive Carers Allowance or Carers Benefit you might be entitled to GP visit based on your income.

For more information - https://www2.hse.ie/services/schemes-allowances/gp-visit-cards/gp-visit-cards/

2.c. Long Term Illness Scheme

In the past if a child has a single diagnosis of autism they were not eligible under this scheme. However, people with a diagnosis which includes intellectual disability may claim for drugs required for the condition. Also the list has recently been extended to include ADHD. It has come to our attention that

many people with autism who have not received a Medical Card have successfully applied for a Long Term Illness Card. It is useful for medical items e.g. if your OT recommended a special chair to help with posture they might be able to purchase the chair from the long term illness budget if your child has a long term illness card.

The Long Term Illness Scheme does not depend on your income or other circumstances and is separate from the Medical Card scheme and the GP Visit Card Scheme.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/health/drugs-and-medicines/longtermillnessscheme/

Link to application form - https://www2.hse.ie/services/schemes-allowances/lti/apply/

2.d. Drug Payment Scheme (DPS)

If you are not entitled to Carer's Allowance or Carer's Benefit you can apply for the Drugs Payment Scheme. The scheme covers the cost of medications. Under the scheme every family pays a maximum of €80 per month for prescribed drugs and medicines and certain appliances. For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/health/drugs-andmedicines/drugspaymentscheme/ Link to application form - https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/Drugs_Payment_Scheme_application.pdf

2.e. Discretionary Hardship Fund

If you have a medical card and are prescribed an item that is not on the PCRS list (eg. Melatonin) your pharmacist or Local Health Office can apply for it to be paid for by the Discretionary Hardship Scheme. This will reduce the cost of the item to €1.50. Your pharmacist can complete the form below on your behalf. Please note that melatonin needs to be prescribed by a paediatrician or psychiatrist initially. It can be prescribed by the GP going forward.

https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/pcrs/circulars/pharmacy/discretionary%20hardship%20arrangements.pdf

2.f. Home Support

Home Support is a service administered through your local Community Disability Network Team within the Health Services Executive. Home Support workers are sourced by the HSE from an agency. If you have someone you wish to provide the Home Support and who is willing to do the training (unpaid) with the agency this can be approved.

Recent Home Support Information from Louth Children's Disability Services:

- Home Support will be allocated for a defined period of time and will be goal-focused.
- Home Support will be reviewed regularly

- Home Support is not an automatic entitlement
- An Initial Screening and a Needs Assessment must be carried out.
- Home Support Workers are employees of the HSE or contracted from an agency

Eligibility Criteria

- Children (up to 18 years) must have care needs above the norm which the parents/carers are finding it difficult to meet.
- You must reside in Louth and be involved with Louth Disability Services
- The objective of Home Support is to supplement the care provided by the parents and is not a child minding service.
- There must be significant issues present that impact on the parent/carers ability to provide for the child's needs and where there are issues which may impact on the wellbeing and development of the child

All families who have a family member with a disability living with them and who are known to one of the teams are entitled to an assessment for the service. The assessment is carried out by the social worker on the team. This entails discussion around what support services exist for the family and within their extended family and in the wider community, what particular care needs the individual with a disability has and how home support might alleviate the situation. For some families, home support is provided to give parents/carers a break, to spend time with other children in the family or to allow a parent to follow a particular programme by freeing them up to work with the person with disability. Home support workers have been employed to work with a child on a particular structured activity programme or in a social activity/befriending programme with a young person. Whatever support the family has had can be discussed with the social worker.

The home support arrangement is reviewed on a regular basis. Home support workers do not work bank holidays except in exceptional circumstances. They have annual leave and sickness entitlements. During such leave, there is generally no replacement home support.

2.g. Direct Payments

Direct payment is a system where the HSE provides a disabled person with their own budget for services. You employ a broker to organise the deal for you. The funding can be used for disability services eg. Physio and can be used to employ a personal assistant (PA). This system is very common in the UK but has not yet taken off in Ireland.

There have been a couple of pilot projects across the country in Direct Payments which are currently being piloted. The HSE are not accepting any new applications for Direct Payments until the outcome of the pilot project is published.

We created Ireland Direct Payment Support in 2015 to manage and facilitate Direct Payments for Parents but until the review is completed nothing is being authorised – (please see website) See - https://www.theatnetwork.com/

2.h. Respite

Respite is a term generally associated with providing families with a break from caring. All respite centres are funded by the HSE but may be operated by different service providers who tender to operate the service. Respite Centres are subject to HIQA inspections and inspection reports are available on HIQA.ie

Children's Residential respite is provided in Co Louth is provided by

- The Maria Goretti Centre in Lordship which is currently run by Rehab on a 6 night basis.
- The Talbot Group run Glyde Manor in Tallanstown which has 6 beds.
- Sonas Group have a new afterschool and Day Respite Service in Marley's Lane, Drogheda.

In Meath children's respite is provided by

- Rehab in the Meadows Navan which is a 6 day respite with 5 beds.
- Pinewoods Children's Respite in Ashbourne run by Praxis care with 5 beds.
- Castlewood House in Trim run by Talbot group which is a seven day/night respite facility which can facilitate 5 service users at any one time.

  If you wish to apply for overnight respite you should contact your social worker directly.

Adult Respite in Louth is provided by

- St John of God services in Drumcar which is only open for adults who are in Drumcar service.
- Mylife Ireland in Ardee
- Talbot Group – Bower House, Balbriggan – Respite for young adults aged between 18-30 with complex needs including challenging behaviour. Opened April 2018.
- Praxis Dundalk – adult respite service opened Jan 2019

Adult Residential services in Louth & Meath are provided by a variety of service providers funded by the HSE. The application process can be long so it's best to contact your social worker. If no social worker is available then the Disability Manager for your county can start the application process.
All new residential services are community based and there are many individuals with additional needs living in houses in the community all over Louth & Meath.

Mo Shaol HomeShare Services – Positive Futures

The Mo Shaol HomeShare Service enables children with a learning disability, physical disability, acquired brain injury or autism to be supported by a volunteer family or an individual for a short break or on a longer term basis. Mo Shaol was established in 2013 in Louth as an alternative respite option. Positive Futures partnered with the HSE in 2017 to expand the service for adults and children across Louth and Meath. Volunteer carer's (home share hosts) generally provide care in their own homes for which they

receive a tax free allowance. This allows the person receiving care to form long term relationships with their volunteer host and allows carers to access meaningful long-term respite. For further information, contact john.mahon@positive-futures.net or kirsty.cooke@positivefutures.net
Website - https://positive-futures.ie/

2 i. Free Continence Wear Scheme

Louth & Meath

Toilet Training Support

Parents and guardians of children who are accepted and active with the CDNT in Louth can take part in the **"Toilet Training Your Child with Additional Needs"** workshop if toilet training has been identified as a goal in their child's **Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP)**.

The workshop is designed to help families support their child's toilet training journey by providing practical information, strategies, and advice tailored to children with additional needs.

Parents and guardians of children known to the CDNT in Louth can book a place on the workshop by emailing **Northlouth.cdnt@hse.ie**. or **SouthLouth.cdnt@hse.ie.** In Meath, you can contact your local CDNT – **trim.cdnt@hse.ie**, **admin.dunshaughlin@enableireland.ie**, **admin.navan@enableireland.ie** or **cdnt.kells@hse.ie**

Containment Products

Children **over the age of 4 years**, who have not yet achieved Toilet training, can avail of containment products in line with the **National Guideline for the Promotion of Continence Care and Provision of Containment Products to Children and Young People (2022)**. Attendance at the Toilet Training Workshop is recommended in conjunction with and an assessment of the child's needs and in accordance with national eligibility criteria. Containment products are supplied by the **HSE through the General Medical Card Scheme**.

For further information see: https://www2.healthservice.hse.ie/organisation/national-pppgs/guideline-for-the-promotion-of-continence-care-provision-of-containment-products-to-children-and-young-people/

The following schemes are administered by Revenue

The following tax credits can be applied for on line easily using Revenue's MyAccount system. Alternatively links to the relevant application forms are listed below.

3.a. Incapacitated Child Tax Credit

This is tax credit worth €3,800 per child being cared for with a permanent disability. This can be backdated by 4 years.

To apply, print off this form and bring it to your GP - https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-creditsreliefsand-exemptions/documents/incapacitated-child-tax-credit-claim-form-2.pdf

You will need to complete this form together with the ICC2 form - https://www.revenue.ie/en/personaltax-credits-reliefs-and-exemptions/documents/incapacitated-childtax-credit-claim-form-1.pdf

Your GP will need to certify that your child is permanently incapacitated and will be unable to live independently past the age of 18.

It is often helpful to make an appointment with your GP to discuss your child's care needs in detail as autism is not a physical disability requiring medical care so your GP may not be familiar with your child. Also provide your GP with a copy of your child's diagnostic report as they may not have this on file.

Once your GP has completed the ICC2 form (link above) and you have completed the ICC1 form(link above) you can take it to your local revenue office. If you wish to backdate the claim you can attach a covering letter stating this.

For further information: https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money-and-tax/tax/tax-credits-andreliefsfor-people-with-disabilities/incapacitated-child-tax-credit/

3.b. Home Carer's Tax Credit

This is a tax credit worth €1,950.00. This will increase to €2050 in January 2027. This credit is available where one person cares at home for a dependent child. The carer can earn up to €7,200 and claim the full tax credit. If the carer earns in excess of €7,200 the amount of the tax credit will be reduced. If the carer earns more than €11.100.00 then they cannot claim the Homer Carer's Tax Credit.

This tax credit can be backdated by 4 years if your child is more than 5 years old. You must submit a separate application form for each year you are claiming for.

For more information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money-and-tax/tax/income-taxcreditsand-reliefs/home-carers-tax-credit/

Link to application form - https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-credits-reliefsandexemptions/documents/home-carers-credit-claim-form.pdf

3.c. Allowance for employing a carer for an incapacitated person

If you employ a person to care for your child you can claim tax relief at your highest rate on the lower of the following amounts – the actual cost incurred, or, the maximum of €75,000, less any amount recovered from the HSE.

You cannot claim this tax credit if a Dependent Relative Tax Credit or Incapacitated Child Tax Credit has already been claimed.

This tax credit can be backdated by 4 years if your child is more than 5 years old. You must submit a separate application form for each year you are claiming for.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money-and-tax/tax/tax-creditsandreliefsfor-people-with-disabilities/tax-relief-for-employing-a-home-carer/

Link to application form - https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-credits-reliefs-and-exemptions/documents/form-hk1.pdf or you can claim via MyRevenue

3.d. Deed of Covenant

This seems complicated but once set up is quite straightforward. It is really a worthwhile exercise as illustrated by the worked example below especially if the Covenantor pays tax at the higher rate. This cannot be set up retrospectively.

A deed of covenant is a legal instrument whereby a person guarantees to pay an annual sum to a relative for more than six years. Money received under a covenant will be treated as income in the hands of the recipient and may have implications if that person is receiving a means tested payment e.g. disability allowance. The rule of thumb here is to keep the covenant under the tax exemption limit.

Tax relief on Deeds of Covenant has been restricted in recent years. However where the covenantee is permanently incapacitated and aged 18 or younger full tax relief is available provided that the covenantor is not one of the parents. A parent can however covenant a payment to an autistic permanently incapacitated **adult** son or daughter.

Usually when you set up a trust it is taxed at 6% on the initial set up and 1% per annum after. If the trust is set up for a person with additional needs the trustees can apply for an exemption from this tax.

Please see below for a working example of possible calculation.

How to make a Covenant

Nov-02 Complete the Deed of Covenant Form

Covenantor (Grandfather) must give details of the payment and tax deducted on Form R185 and give to Covenantee (Child) each time payment is made.

Jan-03 Covenantee (Child) reclaims tax at lower rate on Form 54

Note - send Form R185 with Childs Form 54

Covenantor (Grandfather) reclaims tax at higher rate if applicable on Form 54

Nov-03 Grandfather pays Child Covenant amount

Covenantor (Grandfather) must give details of the payment and tax deducted on Form R185 and give to Covenantee (Child) each time payment is made.

Jan-04 Covenantee (Child) reclaims tax at lower rate on Form 54

Covenantor (Grandfather) reclaims tax at higher rate if applicable on Form 54

Repeat this Cycle each year

Life of Covenant

e.g. Covenant Amount is 4000

Amount actually given to child is 3200 as the 800 is reclaimable from tax

		Child Tax Rebate tax at 20%	Grandfather Tax Rebate (22% if tax was paid at higher rate)	
Year 1	3200.00		800.00	880.00
Year 2	3200.00		800.00	880.00
Year 3	3200.00		800.00	880.00
Year 4	3200.00		800.00	880.00
Year 5	3200.00		800.00	880.00
Year 6	3200.00		800.00	880.00
Year 7	3200.00		800.00	880.00
	22400		5600	6160

total tax rebate = 11760

For further information: https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-creditsreliefsandexemptions/donations-and-covenants/deeds-of-covenant/index.aspx

Link to application form: https://www.revenue.ie/en/self-assessmentandselfemployment/documents/deed-of-covenant.pdf

Link to claim form: https://www.revenue.ie/en/self-assessment-andselfemployment/documents/claimform-deed-of-covenant.pdf

3.e. Tax Relief on Medical Expenses

If you pay medical expenses which are not covered by the State or your medical insurance company, you can claim tax relief on some of these expenses.

You can only claim back tax relief on medical expenses if you pay tax.

You can claim for the cost of speech & language therapy carried out by a speech and language therapist for a qualifying child. You can claim for treatment from a psychologist or psychotherapist and the cost of educational psychological assessment carried out by an educational psychologist for a qualifying child. You can claim for physiotherapy prescribed by a doctor.

You can claim relief for hygiene products or specialist clothing if these are necessary for a child's treatment up to €500. Although occupational therapy is not specifically mentioned, it may be worth applying for the tax credit.

Revenue offers a receipts tracker service to upload your receipts through the MyAccount revenue online service. If you do not use the receipts tracker service, you must retain receipts for all items claimed for 6 years as you may be audited. See - https://www.revenue.ie/en/onlineservices/services/common/manage-your-receipts-with-receiptstracker.aspx

You must use the MyAccount system on revenue.ie to claim this tax relief. The Med 1 form is no longer available (source – revenue.ie)

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money-and-tax/tax/incometaxcreditsand-reliefs/taxation-and-medical-expenses/

3.f. Exemptions/Refunds for Disabled Passengers/Drivers: Primary Medical Certificate

Severely disabled persons who use a specially adapted motor vehicle as passengers and who meet certain criteria are entitled to Exemptions from motor tax and refund/exemption from Vehicle Registration Tax:

- Refund of VAT on vehicle and adaptations.
- Refund of duty paid on fuel (up to 2,730 litres a year)
- Motor tax exemption
- Exemption from toll fees

The Primary Medical Certificate mainly applies to people who are physically unable to walk but a small number of children with autism have qualified for this on the basis that because of their diagnosis and resultant behaviours they have mobility issues.

Please note this scheme is based on mobility issues and the criteria are extremely strict. The vehicle must be specially constructed or adapted to carry the Primary Medical Certificate holder.

For primary medical certificates, contact your local HSE centre. If this is refused you can appeal - https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/lho/

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/travel-andrecreation/transportanddisability/tax-relief-for-disabled-drivers-and-disabled-passengers/

To apply, use the MyAccount service on Revenue.ie

Otherwise, print this form and post it - http://www.revenue.ie/en/importing-vehiclesdutyfreeallowances/documents/vrt/form-dd1.pdf

3.g. Local Property Tax Exemptions

If you purpose build a house or spend over 25% of the value of the house (i.e. value per your property tax valuation) on adaptations because of a person's disability then you can apply to get the whole house exempted from property tax.

You can also apply for a partial reduction in the property tax charge

This does not matter whether you have funded the adaptation yourself or been grant funded towards the adaptation or have claimed the VAT back on the installation. The OT has to sign that the works were necessary and are complete.

Application forms -

For under 16's - https://www.revenue.ie/en/property/documents/lpt/form-lpt7-2022-2025.pdf For over 16's - https://www.revenue.ie/en/property/documents/lpt/form-lpt8.pdf

3.h. Homemaker's Scheme

The homemaker's scheme can make it easier for a homemaker to qualify for the contributory state pension. If you get carer's allowance, carer's benefit, carer's support grant or child benefit you are automatically registered for this scheme.

3.i. Long Term Carers Contributions

A new Long-Term Carers Contribution scheme was introduced in January 2024.
Under the scheme, if you have been a full-time carer for at least 20 years (1040 weeks), you can get Long-Term Carers Contributions to help you qualify for the State Pension (Contributory).

A Long-Term Carers Contribution is the same as a paid contribution on your PRSI record for each week that you provide full-time care. The contribution makes it easier for a carer to qualify for the State Pension Contributory when they reach pension age.

To qualify, you must:

- Have lived in Ireland when you were providing the care
- Have been over 16 years and under pension age when you provided care
- Not have been in employment, self-employment, voluntary work, training or education courses for more than 18.5 hours a week
- Not have been getting a weekly social welfare payment when you were caring, except for Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit, Domiciliary Care Allowance or Carer's Support Grant
- Have lived with the person you were caring for and provided full-time care and attention. In some circumstances, you may qualify if you did not live with the person being cared for, but you provided full-time care and attention **What is full time care?**

To get a Long-Term Carers Contribution, you must be providing full-time care to a person who needs full-time care.

A person is seen as needing full-time care when:

- They need continual supervision to avoid danger to themselves, **or**
- They need continual supervision and frequent assistance throughout the day with normal bodily functions. For example, help to walk and get about, eat or drink, get washed or dressed.

The person being cared for must have the nature and extent of their disability certified by a doctor.

How do I use long term carer contributions to qualify for the state pension (contributory)?

To get a State Pension (Contributory) you must have a certain number of paid contributions. The number of contributions also determines your rate of pension.

Once you have reached 20 years (1040 weeks) of providing full-time care, you can include LongTerm Carers Contributions in the calculation of your State Pension (Contributory).

How to apply

You can apply for long term carer's contributions online at mywelfare.ie. You must have a verified MyGovID account to apply using welfare.ie If you cannot apply online, you can contact Pension Caring Supports in the Department of Social Protection to ask for a paper application form. Their contact details are: Department of Social Protection, Pension Caring Supports, McCarter's Road, Buncrana, Co Donegal F93 CH78. Tel: 01 471 5898. Locall 0818 690 690.

3.j. Refund of Value Added Tax VAT

A refund of VAT may be claimed for certain aids and appliances used by people with disabilities to assist them with independent living and working. Examples include computers, ipads, itouches, mp3 players, printers , laminators, digital cameras that are used for the production of PECs pictures can have the VAT reclaimed. OT equipment may also be considered. Revenue may ask for proof of disability and a supporting occupational therapist report may be required.

You can also reclaim the VAT on building works which were carried out because of the needs of the persons disability (irrespective of whether or not they were grant funded)

For further information: https://www.revenue.ie/en/vat/repayments-tounregisteredpersons/disabledpersons/reclaim-vat-aids-appliances.aspx

To claim the VAT refund you should make an application through the My Account Revenue Online Service.

Link to paper version - https://www.revenue.ie/en/vat/documents/form-vat61a.pdf

3.k. Tax Relief on Assistance Dogs

If you own a fully qualified assistance dog you can claim the tax relief on assistance dogs. This is a tax credit of €825. The organisation that provided your dog must be accredited by Assistance Dogs Europe. You will need a letter from the supplier of your assistance dog confirming that you have a trained dog. You need to inform Revenue when you no longer have an assistance dog. You can upload the letter and claim the relief online via MyAccount.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money-and-tax/tax/tax-creditsandreliefsfor-people-with-disabilities/tax-relief-on-assistance-dogs/

3.l. Deposit Interest Retention Tax (DIRT) Exemption

DIRT is a tax paid on your savings, If you have a permanent disability you can claim a refund of DIRT if you are permanently incapacitated from maintaining yourself **and** your tax credits for the year amount to more than the tax that would be due on your income for the year.
You can have up to €50,000 in savings without affecting your Disability Allowance.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/money-and-tax/tax/tax-onsavingsandinvestments/deposit-interest-retention-tax/
Link to application form - http://www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/forms/form54claims.pdf

These grants are administered by your local County Council

4 a. Housing Adaptation Grants for Persons with a Disability

The Housing Adaptation Grant for Persons with a disability is available for works which are reasonably necessary to make a house more suitable for a person with a disability who has an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment. This scheme is administered by your local county council. The scheme includes works such as a level access shower, extensions, sensory rooms (building only – does not cover equipment), or any other works which are reasonably necessary to make a house more suitable for a person with a disability.

To qualify, you must have the grant application approved before works begin, live in the home when the work is completed, have your tax affairs and local property tax payments in order and have tax clearance from revenue if the grant is in excess of €10,000. The scheme is means tested on a sliding scale. The most you can get from January 2025 is €37,500 and the most you can earn to qualify is €75,000. VAT is not covered but can be reclaimed separately from revenue after the work is complete.

If your house is less than one year old the grant will generally not exceed €20,000

If you are a local authority tenant, the local authority will meet the entire cost of the works.

Yearly Household income	**% of costs**	**Max grant for homes built more than 12 months ago**	**Max grant for homes built less than 12 months ago**
Up to 37,500	100%	40,000	20,000
37,500 to 43,750	85%	34,000	17,000
43,751 -50,000	75%	30,000	15,000
50,001 – 62,500	50%	20,000	10,000
62,501 – 75,000	30%	12,000	6,000
Over 75,000	No grant payable	No grant payable	No grant payable

The following are **not** taken into account as income – carer's benefit, carer's allowance, carer's support grant, child benefit, domiciliary care allowance, foster care grant, fuel allowance, household benefits package, living alone allowance and working family payment. A deduction of €6250 applies for each member of the household under 18 or under 23 in full time education. A further deduction of

€6250 applies if a relative is caring full time for the person who the grant is for. In January 2025 a further deduction of €6250 for Housing Mortgage/Rent expenses was introduced. There is a new deduction for Residential Care Fees of up to €12,500 and deduction for the cost of care in the home of up to €12,500 or €6,250 if full time carer deduction is claimed.

Your GP has to complete the medical card section of the application form.

For further information on applying in **Meath** - https://www.meath.ie/council/councilservices/housing/adaptation-grants-for-privatehomeowners/housing-adaptation-grant Link to application form for **Meath** - https://www.meath.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2021-02/Housing%20Adaptation%20Grants%20for%20Older%20People%20and%20People%20with%20a%20Disability%202021_0.pdf

For further information on applying in **Louth** : https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/housing/housing-grants/housing-adaptation-grants-hags-/ Link to application form for **Louth:** **https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/services/housing/housinggrants/housingadaptation-grants-hags-/application-form-housing-adaptation-grants-for-olderpeople-anddisabled-people-2024.pdf**

If you are unable to get a loan from a bank or building society to pay for the costs not covered by the grant, you may be able to get a local authority home improvement loan. For more information see - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housing-grants-and-schemes/localauthorityhomeimprovement-loans/

As noted above, VAT refunds are available on the cost of aids and appliances used by people with disabilities, as well as on the full cost of installation and adaptation work.

If you plan to improve the energy efficiency of your home, you may qualify for the Better Energy Homes Scheme or the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housinggrantsandschemes/warmer-homes-scheme/

3.b. Mobility Aid Grant

This scheme is for people with a disability who find it hard to move around the home due to mobility issues and provides for minor works. Accessible shower, grab rails and ramps are included in the list of available items. The maximum grant is €8000 which may cover 100% of the works. The scheme is available to people with an income of less than €37,500 per year after all deductions and disregards (see the full list in housing adaptation grant for persons with a disability above) . If you do not qualify for the Mobility Aids Grant, you should apply for the Housing Adaptation Grant for Persons with a Disability.

For further information on applying in **Meath** - https://www.meath.ie/council/council-services/housing/adaptation-grants-for-private-home-owners/mobility-aid-grant

Link to application form for **Meath** - https://www.meath.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2025-01/Application%20Form%20-%20Housing%20Adaptation%20Grants%20for%20Older%20People%20and%20People%20with%20a%20disability%20December%202024_1.pdf

For further information on applying in **Louth**: https://www.louthcoco.ie/services/housing/housing-grants/mobility-aid-grants-mags/

Link to application form for **Louth** - https://www.louthcoco.ie/media/a23j5jp4/application-form-housing-adaptation-grants-for-older-people-and-disabled-people-2024.pdf

If you are unable to get a loan from a bank or building society to pay for the costs not covered by the grant, you may be able to get a local authority home improvement loan. For more information see - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housing-grants-and-schemes/localauthorityhomeimprovement-loans/

As noted above, VAT refunds are available on the cost of aids and appliances used by people with disabilities, as well as on the cost of installation and adaptation work.

The following schemes are administered by the Department of Education and Skills.

5.a. Home Tuition Grant

Brief Description and Qualifying Criteria for Children with Autism

Home Tuition is when a qualified tutor teaches your child in their own home. Home tuition is available as an early intervention for children aged between 2.5 – 3 with a diagnosis of autism or between 3 and 4 for whom an early intervention place is not currently available as confirmed by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). Children aged over 4 who will not reach 6 in the current school year who have a recommendation for an early intervention placement and for whom such a placement is not currently available as confirmed by the NCSE are also eligible. Your SENO (Special Education Needs Coordinator) will need to sign off on home tuition before it is granted. If your child attends any of the following early intervention settings you may be able to get the home tuition grant to supplement their hours if no place is available in an Early Intervention Class -

Intervention Settings in HSE funded service providers
Early years settings supported by the Early Childcare & Education Scheme (ECCE) and Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)
Early years settings supported by HSE grant aid or HSE funded pre-school assistant
If you child gets a place on one of the above schemes after your home tuition grant has been approved you must notify the Department immediately.

Hours available
The maximum number of combined hours for home tuition and the above schemes for children aged between 2.5 and 3 is 10 hours and for children aged over 3 is 20 hours a week. These hours are available during the appropriate school calendar.

Tutors
It is up to parents to source a tutor. The tutor must be qualified and registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland. The Department does not keep lists of available tutors. Parents and legal guardians are not permitted to act as tutors. You should not commence home tuition until you have received your letter of approval. All teachers must be vetted by the Teaching Council of Ireland before you begin home tuition. Parents must request a copy of the vetting disclosure when they engage a tutor for the first time. The tutor can apply to be vetted through the Teaching Council of Ireland website. Parents are responsible for ensuring that tutors are suitable to work with their children and to ensure all the relevant checks are carried out.

Payment
Parents must complete a Payment Claim Form. This must be signed by both the parent and the tutor at the end of each month These forms must be posted to the Department. Payment is made directly to tutors and parents are not permitted to pay tutors privately under the scheme. It is the parent's

responsibility to ensure all the correct paperwork is completed. For further information including application/claim forms - https://www.gov.ie/en/service/d15f58-hometuition/#home-tuition-payments

5.b. Summer Programme (formerly known as July Provision)

The Summer Programme is intended as a stop-gap for the Summer months to keep children engaged with learning.

Children with Autism are entitled to The Summer Programme. This can be delivered in two ways:

- School Based – Schools can decide on a year to year basis whether they will offer all or some or no school-based July provision. If the school offers the full four weeks then the length of school day and transport arrangements should be the same. If the school is offering July provision you cannot decide to do home based.
- Home Based - if your child is not yet at school or if the school is not offering July provision you can apply to the DES for July provision which is provided at 10 hours per week – i.e. to hire a home tutor as in the Home Tuition scheme. Application forms are usually available in May (see link to further information below).
- If you are already in the Home Tuition scheme then the year just continues into July and the allocation remains at 20 hours per week.

Where a child's special school is not running a school based programme and home based JP is not suitable, parents can email schoolsummerprogramme@eduction.gov.ie.

If a place becomes available in another location, the child's participation in a programme may be organised.

Special Needs Assistants (SNA) can now provide July Provision.

For further information as well as application forms/timesheets etc –

https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a0e87-summer-provision-home-based-programme/#

5.c. Assistive Technology Grant

The Assistive Technology Scheme provides funding to schools towards the purchase of equipment for pupils who have been assessed as having a special educational need that requires specialist equipment in order to access the curriculum. Grant-aid is pupil-specific and based on the pupil's needs, as determined by the associated professional. There is no upper limit.

How to Apply

The school will liaise with your local Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO). Schools provide proof of to the Department's Special Needs and Tuition Grant Section such as receipt for equipment purchased, direct debit payment details or copy of credit card statement. Applications for equipment are considered on the basis of the following criteria:

- The application is supported by a professional recommendation (e.g. occupational therapy) which outlines that assistive technology is necessary or essential for the pupil to access the curriculum. This includes illustrating how the equipment will be used. An assessment indicating that equipment would be beneficial, desirable or useful will not be sufficient
  since this could be true in the case of any pupil.
- Evidence must be supplied that the child will require the recommended equipment throughout the school day and that existing equipment in the school is insufficient to meet the child's needs without unduly depriving other children of access to the equipment.
- The application meets the Department's criteria for this support

Your SENO has to approve the application and forward it to the Department of Education.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/primary-andpostprimaryeducation/educational-supports/assistive-technology-grant-students-with-disabilities/

5.d. School Transportation for Children with Special Needs

The Department provides free school transportation for children with special needs. Bus Eireann operates the service. School transportation is applied for by the school and must be approved by the local SENO. The SENO can also make an application for an escort to accompany a child if this is required for the child's safety and care. The school employs the escort directly. If the Department cannot supply transportation, parents can apply for a grant towards the cost of transportation at the end of the school year. The grant is paid as follows –

Kilometres (km)	**Rate per km**		
Up to 6437	41.80 cent	Over 6437	31.78 cent

For further information complete the customer contact form here https://cs.education.gov.ie/ or click here https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/school-transport-scheme-for-childrenwithspecial-educational-needs-arising-from-a-dis.pdf

Application form for the Special Transport Grant can be downloaded from the NCSE website to be completed in conjunction with the school and returned to the School Transport Section, Portlaoise Rd, Tullamore, R35 Y2N5 057 932 5466/7

5.e. Access & Inclusion Model (AIM)

AIM allows children with additional needs to attend preschool using ECCE funding. Your chosen pre-school can apply for AIM support for your child. This often involves funding for an extra member of staff in the room (level 7), but this is not one-to-one. A formal diagnosis of a disability is not required to receive AIM targeted supports. There is no charge for parents for ECCE and AIM. Your child may also be entitled to home tuition hours (see home tuition above). For further information visit: https://aim.gov.ie/

5.f. RACE Scheme (Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Exams)

This scheme provides exam supports such as readers, word processers, spelling waivers, extra time, scribes for students with physical, visual, learning, hearing or sensory difficulties including autism who are undertaking junior or leaving cert exams.

The school submits applications on behalf of students generally in the October prior to the exams.

For further information - https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/state-examinations/examination-arrangements-for-students-with-disabilities/

The following scheme is administered by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs

6.a. National Childcare Sponsorship Scheme

Most parents are aware of the National Childcare Sponsorship Scheme (NCS), which helps them meet childcare costs. There are two types of childcare subsidy for children: a universal subsidy that is not means-tested and an income-assessed subsidy that is means-tested.

The National Childcare Sponsorship Scheme allows children with high care requirements to receive free childcare without any means testing.

Parents who are accepted on the scheme can avail of up to 45 hours of childcare. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs pays the childcare service directly. Parents don't need to pay any cost to the childcare provider.

To start the process, you will need to contact your Public Health Nurse, who must apply for the scheme on your behalf. For further information, click on **https://www.ncs.gov.ie/en/faqs/**. Look at the dropdown menu and under "What is a Sponsor Referral?" You can also contact NCS parent Support line on 01 906 8530.

The Following Scheme is Administered by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Innovation & Research

7. a. Fund for Students With Disabilities

The FSD is a fund for undergraduate and postgraduate students with disabilities that helps cover the cost of certain supports such as

- Assistive Technology Equipment and software
- None medical helpers
- Academic or learning support
- Deaf supports
- Transport Supports

To qualify for the FSD you must

- Have a disability in one or more of the qualifying categories
- Be a full-time or part-time student
  Have been resident in Ireland for 3 of the previous 5 years (before your approved course starts)
- Have a verified need for specific supports to attend your course

You cannot apply directly for FSD, your college will apply on your behalf.

You will need to register with the disability or access office and show them medical proof of your disability.

For further information - https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/fund-for-students-with-disabilities/

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