



**Brainwave The Irish Epilepsy Association**  
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Dublin 12

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## Entitlements & Benefits

### HEALTH, WELFARE & TAXATION ENTITLEMENTS, SUPPORTS, RELIEFS 2010

(Incorporating changes from Budget 2010)

Free Medication: All persons with epilepsy are entitled to anti-epileptic medication free of charge through the Long Term Illness Scheme. Where an applicant is eligible for the Primary Care Re-imbursment Scheme (PCRS was formerly GMS or Medical Card) this covers medication also. The L.T.I.S. is granted irrespective of means to all persons not entitled to a P.C.R.S Card. For the L.T.I.S. apply to your health board for a form to be completed by the applicant and a doctor/consultant. New prescription charges mean that from April 2010 .50cent is payable per item prescribed per month up to a maximum of €10.00 per month.

PLEASE NOTE: Free Travel is available only to persons on specified benefits and allowances and not to all persons with epilepsy. From March 07 there has been automatic entitlement to a Free Companion Travel Pass to persons aged 66-74 who are medically unfit to travel unaccompanied.

AIDS AND APPLIANCES: BRAINWAVE SCHEME: Brainwave the Irish Epilepsy Association runs a scheme for the provision of an Epi-Alert Identity Bracelet or a Safety Pillow free of charge to members only. The bracelet carries the number of Contactors Medical Bureau in Dublin which will store applicants' details as provided by their doctor. In the event of an emergency these details can be accessed from the Bureau by authorized personnel if the wearer is unconscious or unable to give details of their epilepsy and treatment to emergency services, hospitals or police. The safety pillow is suitable for those with sleep seizures. To qualify for either a free pillow or bracelet you need to be a paid up current member of Brainwave the Irish Epilepsy Association and complete an application form obtainable by contacting 01-4557500.

## CONDITIONAL ENTITLEMENTS:

### **Primary Care Re-Imbursement Scheme (PCRS) (formerly GMS or Medical Card):**

**Those covered by a PCRS card get all medicines and health care free of charge.**

**To Qualify:** Household income must normally be below a certain level. This level is adjusted every year, and it varies too according to whether you are single or married, the number of children in the family and any rent or mortgage you are paying and some travel expenses. In some cases, persons whose income is above the guidelines may still be given a medical card if the health board considers they are unable to provide the necessary care for themselves and their family. A medical card may be awarded to an individual member of the family on an individual basis. Income is gross income less PRSI contributions.

There is also now a limited form of Doctor visit only PCRS card to cover GP visits but not the cost of prescriptions for those who don't qualify on income grounds but for whom the cost of visiting the GP is prohibitively high. This scheme is additional to the existing GMS scheme

A means test applies to those persons over 70 years who exceed a certain income limit. Those over 70s below this threshold qualify for a medical card. Those with incomes exceeding this threshold but who have difficulty meeting their medical needs will be eligible to apply instead for a medical card under the discretionary scheme operated by the HSE.

**How to Apply:** Application forms are available at your HSE/health centre. In an emergency, you may be able to claim short-term assistance with medical costs from the Dept of Social Welfare.

## PAYMENTS

## DISABILITY ALLOWANCE

**Paid by:** This is a means tested payment from Department of Social Community & Family affairs.

**To Qualify:** You may be entitled to this if you are aged 16 to 66 years and are suffering from a specified disability which results in you being "substantially handicapped" in undertaking work which would otherwise be suitable for a person of your age, experience and qualifications. You must not be living in an institution. Recipients qualify for Free Travel Pass, other Benefits are conditional. In Budget 2010 the basic personal rate is reduced from €204.30 to €196.00

## DOMICILIARY CARE ALLOWANCE

**Paid by:** This is a health service executive payment which is paid monthly

**To Qualify:** This allowance is paid to parents of children with a severe disability who live at home.

Conditions: This allowance is paid to parents of children with a severe disability who live at home. The HSE guidelines state that while no condition is debarred conditions such as asthma, diabetes and epilepsy which are considered treatable are not normally considered unless a very high level of care and attention is required. The child must be aged under 16 (at 16 the child may qualify for a disability allowance). The disability must be so severe that the child needs constant care and supervision, substantially more than a child of the same age. Only the child's means are assessed. DCA is only payable if the child lives at home. The full maximum rate is now € 309.50 per month. A reduced rate may be payable in some instances.

## RESPIRE CARE GRANT

This grant is extended to all carers providing full time care to an eligible older person or an eligible person with a disability, irrespective of means but conditions apply (see below). Budget 2008 increased this grant to from E1500 to E1700 per person being cared for. The grant is paid annually at the end of June. Apply in the month of June if you are a fulltime carer for an eligible child or adult with a disability. Form RCG 1 is available from your local social welfare office or from your local Citizens Information Centre or from [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie) or by phoning the LoCall Leaflet Request line 1890 20 23 25. Complete a separate form for each individual person if you are caring for more than one qualifying person.

Return completed forms to: Respite Care Grant Section PO Box 10085, Dublin 2 Tel 01-6732222

**NB:** you are not expected to be caring 24 hours, each case is assessed individually. The Department will apply the arrangements in a flexible manner considering the needs of yourself and the person being cared for. You must have been caring for the person for at least six months including the first Thursday in June to qualify. You must live with the person or have a direct system of communication between your home and theirs. You may take up education; training or work outside home for a specified limited number of hours weekly if the Dept of Social, Community and Family Affairs approves this.

**NB:** Full Time Care is defined as requiring continuous supervision and frequent help throughout the day with personal needs, walking and getting about, dressing, washing eating and drinking; or continuous supervision to avoid danger to themselves and full time care and needing attention for at least six months which must include the first Thursday in June.

## **DISABILITY (SICKNESS) BENEFIT**

Paid by: The Department of Social Community and Family Affairs

To Qualify: You must be under 66, be incapable of work due to illness and have 52 PRSI contributions. Rates are being reduced from €204.30 to €196.00 (personal).

## **INVALIDITY PENSION**

Paid by: The Department of Social Community and Family Affairs

To Qualify: You may get this if you have been receiving Disability Benefit for at least twelve months or sending in certificates for credits for at least a year and will continue to be incapable of work for at least a further twelve months. It may be possible to go straight onto Invalidity Pension if the illness is of such a nature that you are unlikely to be able to work for the rest of your life. Budget 2010 reduced the basic personal rate to €201.50 weekly (under 65). Conditions: You must have at least 260 contributions paid since entering insurance and at least 48 contributions paid or credited in the year before.

## **DISABLEMENT BENEFIT/UNEMPLOYABILITY SUPPLEMENT**

Paid by: The Department of Social Community and Family Affairs

To Qualify: You will receive this if you have a physical or mental disability as a result of an injury at work or an occupational disease and you are in insurable employment.

## **CARER'S ALLOWANCE**

This is a means tested payment by the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs. The weekly income disregard is €332.50 for a single person and €665 for a couple. In Budget 2010 weekly rate of payment will reduce to €212 (aged under 66) and aged 66 and over remains at €239.

A carer providing full time care and attention to a qualifying person may qualify for payment.

Conditions: The person must be incapacitated and require full time care and attention and must be likely to require it for at least 12 months. They must be in receipt of a qualifying payment such as Invalidity or blind pension, Disability Allowance, a similar social security payment from another EU Member State or from a country with which Ireland has a bilateral social security agreement, or full rate Domiciliary Care Allowance. Recipients of this payment may be eligible in their own right for Free Travel and |the Household Benefits package.

## **CARERS BENEFIT**

This is a short term payment for up to 2 years for those who give up employment to care for someone who requires full time care. You must have sufficient PRSI contributions. The conditions require recipients of Carers Benefit to be in employment for at least 8 weeks in the previous 26 weeks prior to commencement of full time caring. You may currently work up to 15 hours per week and still qualify for payment. There is a maximum income which you can earn from employment or self employment. In Budget 2010 the basic weekly rate of payment is reduced to €213.00

## **PERSONAL DISABILITY PAYMENT replaced by Disability Allowance**

Full rate Disability Allowance is available to all persons resident in institutions who were previously ineligible for this payment. This replaces the €35 weekly payment.

## **INCOME TAX**

**Incapacitated Child Tax Credit** may be claimed by a parent or guardian of a child who has a permanent disability whether physical or intellectual and is permanently incapacitated from maintaining him/herself independently in the long term. The conditions are that the child must have become incapacitated (1) before the age of 21 or (2) after age 21 whilst still in full-time education or training for a trade/profession for a minimum of 2 years. Apply to the revenue commissioners with medical evidence such as a doctor's letter. The Tax Credit €3660.

Qualifying disabilities include Cystic Fibrosis, Blindness, Deafness, Downs syndrome, Spastic Paralysis, Acute Autism, certain forms of Schizophrenia. If the disability can be corrected by treatment the child is not considered permanently incapacitated so children whose epilepsy is controlled/controllable by medication would not be eligible unless they have another qualifying disability. If a child has epilepsy which is considered refractory or intractable the parent/guardian may apply for consideration for this credit. The list of disabilities above is not exhaustive.

## **Allowance for Employing a Carer for an Incapacitated Person**

This allowance is up to €50,000 at your highest tax rate is available where a carer is employed to care for a person with a disability including a child. One or more family members of the person being cared for can claim the allowance.

**Home Carers Tax Credit** of €900 may be available to married couples who are jointly assessed where one spouse is a home carer for a dependent child or children (for whom Child benefit is paid) or for a person over 65, or someone who is permanently incapacitated. There are limits applicable to the level of income of the home carer.

## **Dependent Relative Tax Credit**

This credit of €80 may be available to a person who maintains a relative who has a disability - subject to a maximum income level.

## **Health Expenses (FORM MED 1)**

The level of tax relief

You may claim tax relief on certain medical expenses that you have already not claimed for from private health insurance, these include the cost of doctor's visits, hospital and nursing home charges, prescription charges, certain specified equipment, educational assessment and therapy. New provisions are now coming into effect which abolishes the rule which required a person to pay the first €125 of allowable expenses (or the first €250 for a family). Also the rule regarding the relationship between the taxpayer and the person whose expenses are paid for is abolished so it is no longer confined to spouse, dependent child etc. Claims may be submitted for the preceding four tax years only.

For full details of all the above allowable reliefs and the conditions attached see [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie) or phone your regional revenue district.

## **Other Provisions under the Health Service Executive and Local Authority**

**The Drug Payment Scheme** is available to ensure that the cost of prescription medicines for each family do not exceed a certain limit each month. Although people with epilepsy receive free medication on the Long Term Illness Scheme they do have to pay for prescriptions for some other conditions if they don't qualify for a medical card. The threshold is increased to €120 as the maximum payable by families registered for the scheme per month. Apply to your local Health service executive to register for the scheme. Payments made under the scheme may be allowable against income tax.

**Hospital charges** Patient bed charges are €75 per night for a maximum of 10 nights per year. Accident & Emergency charges are €100.00 for persons without a medical card or GP referral letter. In cases of hardship a letter outlining the circumstances should be sent to the patient accounts department of the hospital.

**Health Board Aids and Appliances Scheme** If you require a safety appliance such as a helmet or alarm you may apply to your local health service executive (disability section) for funding with supporting documentation. Applications are assessed individually under the scheme.

**Local Authority House Adaptation Grants for People with Disabilities** If you require adaptations to be made to your home on account of your epilepsy you may apply for a grant from your local authority for all or part of the cost. The types of work covered

are usually at the level of modification of bathrooms to include showers but may extend to provision of ground level bathroom/bedroom. An Occupational Therapist report recommending such adaptations is essential.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE ABOVE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL COMMUNITY AND FAMILY AFFAIRS, REVENUE DISTRICT OR CITIZENS INFORMATION CENTRE.**

**Acknowledgments:**

This leaflet was compiled with the assistance of information supplied by  
Citizens Information - [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie)  
Dept. of Social, Community and Family Affairs - [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)  
Revenue - [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie)

**NOTE:**

[www.medicalcard.ie](http://www.medicalcard.ie) is a new website which gives clear income guidelines for medical cards and GP visit cards. It has a "calculate your eligibility" function where you can enter details and see if you might qualify.