

Information Booklet for unmarried parents

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About this booklet

Treoir believes all families should be valued equally, regardless of the marital status of the parents. There are however differences in family law for married and unmarried parents. Although Treoir is conscious that the term “unmarried” carries a lot of stigma for many people which we do not want to further, at the moment this is the commonly used reference to describe all parents not based on marriage. In this booklet, unmarried parents refers to one-parent families (or lone parents), parents sharing access and custody, cohabiting couples who are not married, non-resident parents who were never married to the other parent. Unless otherwise stated, it does not refer to parents who were married but are now separated or divorced.

LGBT+ parents: Treoir aims to be a welcoming organisation for all families, including LGBT+ parents and any parents (both opposite-sex and same-sex parents) who had children through donor-assisted human reproduction and surrogacy. In this booklet, we used gender neutral language as much as possible 1) to avoid reinforcing gendered notions of parenting responsibilities between opposite-sex parents, and 2) to include as many parents as possible 3) to be inclusive of all children. However, the Irish legal system is different between children born to opposite-sex unmarried parents and children born through donor-assisted human reproduction and surrogacy

For clarity, ‘Mother’ is used in this booklet in relation to the parent who gave birth to the child, independent of how they identify. ‘Father’ is used for the other biological parent of the child, independent of how they identify.

Therefore, this book is primarily intended for (1) opposite-sex parents, (2) parents who were never married to each other, (3) and parents who did not have children through donor-assisted human reproduction.

For any LGBT+ parents who are struggling with their rights and responsibilities, we recommend you get in contact with Treoir over the phone, through email or through our social media channels.

To keep up-to-date with relevant budget and legal changes, visit our website www.treoir.ie, follow us on Facebook and Instagram or phone Treoir’s Information Service at 01-6700 120

The information in this Pack is not to be considered medical or legal advice. Specific medical or legal advice should be obtained from a registered health or legal professional.

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate, no responsibility can be accepted by Treoir for any error or omission. The Pack is a guide only.

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- Treoir is a membership organisation which promotes the rights and welfare of unmarried parents and their children in Ireland.
- Treoir provides a specialist, national, free, confidential information service to:
 - unmarried parents - mothers and fathers
 - living together
 - living apart
 - opposite and same-sex
 - grandparents and other relatives
 - professionals working with unmarried parents.
- Treoir provides outreach information work-shops on request to groups of unmarried parents and those working with them on legal issues, social welfare, parenting etc.
- Treoir is responsible for the coordination of the Young Parents Support Programme (YPSP)
- Treoir is responsible for the project coordination of Kinship Care (KCI)
- Treoir is a non-governmental organisation funded by the Health Service Executive, the HSE Sexual Health & Crisis Pregnancy Programme, Health and Wellbeing, Strategy & Research, TUSLA, the Citizens Information Board and Pobal.

Guardianship

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/information-guardianship.php

What is guardianship?

Guardianship means having the right and responsibility to be involved in making major decisions about the upbringing of a child, for example

- Where the child lives
- Passport applications
- Consent to taking the child out of the country
- Where the child goes to school
- Consent to medical treatment
- Religion of the child
- Consent to adoption

...and other matters affecting the welfare of the child.

When a child is born who is automatically its guardian?

The mother is always a guardian. A father does not have automatic guardianship rights at the time of a child's birth even if his name is on his child's birth certificate.

How does the father get guardianship rights?

- By signing a Statutory Declaration (form S.I. No. 201 of 2020) with the mother, if she consents. The form can be downloaded from the Guardianship section of our website www.treoir.ie
- The statutory declaration can be witnessed by any of the following:
 - a solicitor
 - a peace commissioner or commissioner of oaths
 - by the register for birth, death, and marriages
- By satisfying the cohabitation period: A father who lives with the child's mother for at least 12 consecutive months including not less than three months after the child's birth, will automatically be the guardian of their child. The three month period does not have to take place directly after the birth of the child. It can be fulfilled any time before the child turns 18 provided it is part of the 12 consecutive months during which the parents have lived together. The cohabitation period can only be calculated going forward from the commencement date of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015. This means that guardianship will only be acquired automatically where the parents live together for at least 12 months after the 18th of January 2016. **While not mandatory, fathers in this situation can and should seek a formal declaration from the court that the 'living together' test has been satisfied and that the father is a guardian of the child.**
- By applying to the local District Court to be appointed a guardian
- By marrying the mother.

A father does **not automatically have guardianship rights if his name is on the birth certificate.**

Who else can become a guardian?

Since the commencement of the relevant legislation contained in the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, on the 18th January 2016, it is possible for a person other than a parent to apply to court to be appointed as guardian of a child.

An application can be made by:

- a person who is married to or is in a civil partnership with, or has been for over 3 years a cohabitant of a parent of the child and has shared the responsibility of the day-to-day care of the child for at least 2 years.
- a person who has provided for the day-to-day care of the child for a continuous period of 12 months or more and where the child has no parent or guardian who is willing or able to exercise guardianship rights and responsibilities in respect of the child. TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency, will be notified of such an application.
- a person who is appointed as a testamentary guardian. See below for more details.

Temporary Guardianship

A qualifying guardian* may nominate a person to act as a guardian if they are unable, through serious illness or injury, to exercise his/her guardianship rights. The nomination form is available on www.treoir.ie under the 'guardianship' section

*A qualifying guardian of a child is someone who:

- Is the child's parent and has custody of them, or
- Is not the child's parent but has custody of the child instead of any living parent.

Testamentary Guardianship - Make a will

All parents who are guardians, but especially parents who are sole guardians, should make a will appointing guardians of their children to act on their behalf in the event of their death.





Custody and Access

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/information-access-and-custody.php



Custody

Custody is having the responsibility for the day-to-day care of a child.

Who has custody?

Where parents are not married to each other:

- The mother of a child born outside marriage has automatic sole custody of the child. Where both parents agree, it is possible for them to share custody (joint custody) of the child on an informal basis. If parents are having difficulty agreeing joint custody they could consider mediation (see page 16) or Collaborative Law (see page 5).
- Where an agreement for custody and/or access is entered into and made in writing (including written agreements made during mediation), an application can then be made to court for an order to make that agreement a Rule of Court.
- Where the parents cannot agree, the father can apply to the local District Court for joint or sole custody.
- In certain circumstances, relatives and certain other persons can apply to the court for custody or joint custody of a child. For detailed information see 'Access and Custody' at www.treoir.ie

Access

Access is the right of a child and a parent and/or guardian who do not live together to spend time together. This right can also be granted to relatives and others.

Who has access?

- Where one parent has full custody that parent can informally agree to the other parent having access to their child.
- If parents are having difficulty agreeing access they could consider mediation.
- The other parent can go to the local District Court to apply for access.

Any person who is related to a child (for example grandparent, step-parent, aunt, uncle) or who has acted as a parent to the child (in loco parentis) and certain other persons can apply to the local District Court for access to a child.

What is Mediation?

If you are having difficulty reaching agreement about times/places of access or any parenting issues you could try mediation. Mediation is where a third party, a mediator, attempts to help parents reach agreement and to work out arrangements concerning their children. See page 17.

Collaborative Law

Collaborative Law is another way of sorting out family disputes. Parents work with specially trained solicitors. They receive legal advice and guidance and together with their solicitors, discuss and try to sort out issues through face-to-face meetings. Contact the Association of Collaborative Practitioners on email:info@acp.ie or visit www.acp.ie.

If you think you might qualify for Legal Aid contact your local law centre, 066 947 1000 or visit or visit www.legalaidboard.ie

With all cases involving children, any decision made by the court will be made in the best interests of the child and the court will consider the views of the child where possible given their age and understanding.

Enforcement Orders

Where there is a court order in place for either access or custody and the access or custody is either unreasonably denied or not taken up, a parent/guardian of the child may apply to the court for an enforcement order. Before making an enforcement order the court will consider the views of the child where possible given his/her age and understanding.

The enforcement order may provide for one or more of the following:

- that a parent and/or guardian be granted additional access to the child
- that a parent and/or guardian be reimbursed for any expenses they may have had as a result of the refusal to either take up or allow the access
- that either or both parties do one or more of the following: receive information about the availability of mediation, attend a parenting programme, attend family counselling.

Many people represent themselves in the District Court – see Treoir’s booklet Taking the Stand.

Contact	Find your local Law Centre	Law Office	District Court office at	Centres (FLAC)
	066 947 1000	Dublin	www.courts.ie	01 906 1010
	www.legalaidboard.ie/en/	01 888 6355		www.flac.ie
	contact-us/find-a-law-centre/			
	District Court Family	Find your local	Free Legal Advice	

Cohabitation

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/target-co-habiting.php

Who are cohabitants?

Cohabitants are two opposite or same-sex adults who are:

- Living together in an intimate and committed relationship.
- Not married to each other.

If you are a 'qualified cohabitant' and your relationship ends, either through separation or death, you may be able to apply to the court for rights under the 'redress scheme'. You do not have to be a qualified cohabitant to seek maintenance for a child (see page 8).

Who is a qualified cohabitant?

You are a qualified cohabitant if you:

- have been cohabiting for at least 5 years or 2 years if you have had a child together and you must be able to show that you are financially dependent on your ex-partner.

NOTE

- You cannot be a qualified cohabitant if either of you is married to someone else and have not been living apart from your spouse for at least 4 of the previous 5 years.

What can I apply for under the redress scheme?

If you are a qualified cohabitant you can apply to the court for certain orders, including a Compensatory Maintenance Order, a Property Adjustment Order and/or a Pension Adjustment Order.

NOTE

- You must apply within 2 years of your relationship ending.
- Generally you must have been living in Ireland for the year before your relationship ends in order to make an application.
- Should your partner die you can claim from their estate without having to show financial dependence.

Cohabitants' Agreements

Cohabitants can make a cohabitants' agreement dealing with their finances. It is also possible to make a legal agreement to opt out of the redress scheme.

Other things cohabitants should know:

Fathers

An unmarried father does not have any automatic legal rights to his child even if his name is on his child's birth cert. However, if after the 18th of January 2016, a father at any time cohabits continuously with the mother of his child for a period of 12 months, including 3 months after the child is born, he will automatically become the guardian of his child. It is recommended the father applies to the court, for a declaration of guardianship to have his guardianship recorded. For more information, see page 2.

Property

Cohabitants are not treated in the same way as married people in relation to any property they may own or share.

Where a house is being bought jointly it is advisable to sign a co-ownership agreement. Check with a solicitor whether it is best for you to have a Joint Tenancy or Tenancy in Common in relation to the house

Inheritance Tax

Cohabitants do not have automatic inheritance rights from each other.

- Cohabiting partners pay Capital Acquisitions Tax (CAT) at 33% on gifts/inheritance over €16,250.
- You can receive a gift or inheritance of a home without paying CAT under certain conditions. See 'Cohabiting Parents' at www.treoir.ie

Income Tax

Cohabitants cannot claim income tax relief in respect of each other.

Social Welfare

Cohabiting families are mostly treated in the same way as married families for social welfare purposes. The incomes of both cohabitants will be considered when assessing means. However, cohabitants are not treated the same as married couples if one of them dies. In 2024, the Supreme Court ordered the State to introduce legislation that included cohabiting couples in the state contributory Widow's Pension. As of December 2024, this legislation has not been passed. Please contact Treoir for more up-to-date information.

Domestic Violence

A cohabitant can apply for a safety order, a barring order or an interim barring order and/or a protection order. See page 35.

Children of cohabiting parents

All children have the same succession and maintenance rights whether their parents are married or not.

Maintenance

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/information-maintenance.php



There is no set amount of maintenance. It depends on the financial situation of the parents

Maintenance for the child

Both parents have a duty to financially maintain their dependent children up to the age of 18, up to the age 23 if the child is in full-time education, or indefinitely if the child has a disability that means they cannot maintain themselves.

A cohabitant of a person who is a parent, or a cohabitant of a person who has the day-to-day care (in loco parentis), of a child may have to financially maintain the child, where they are not the parent but is a guardian. If a non-parent is ordered to pay maintenance the order will remain in place up until the child is 18 years of age (unless the court orders otherwise).

Arranging Maintenance

- Informal agreements may be made regarding maintenance.
- It can be difficult to agree on a figure. Write down the actual cost of rearing your child.
- Try and be reasonable about what each of you can contribute from your income, social welfare payments etc.
- If you cannot agree on a figure you could try mediation. See page 17.
- If this doesn't work, you can apply to court for a maintenance order.
- There is no set amount of maintenance. It depends on the financial situation of the parents
- €150 is the most the District Court can order for each child per week. There is no maximum amount in the Circuit Court.
- Either parent can go back to court and ask to have the amount increased or decreased as circumstances change. This is called a **Variation Order**.
- If the other parent doesn't pay then you can ask the court for an **Enforcement Order**. You can also ask their employer to deduct the amount of maintenance from their wages. This is called an **Attachment of Earnings Order**.
The employer sends the maintenance amount to the court who then passes it on to you or the employer may send it directly to you. An Attachment of Earnings Order can be requested at the first court hearing for maintenance.

Maintenance for qualified cohabitants:

If at the end of your relationship you are a 'qualified cohabitant' and can show financial dependence on your partner you may apply to the court for maintenance under the redress scheme. See page 6.

What if the parent who is, or should be, paying maintenance lives abroad?

A person who wishes to apply for, vary or enforce maintenance from a person who lives outside of Ireland may seek the assistance of the Irish Central Authority for Maintenance Recovery, provided that the country where the other parent lives is signed up to the relevant UN Convention, or is party to the EC Council Regulation 2009 (see links at www.treoir.ie). This includes all EU countries and the USA , Tel: +353 (0)1 859 2232 / E-mail: mainrecov@justice.ie

Since June 2024, your One-Parent Family Payment is not affected by child maintenance payments. Child maintenance is still considered for other forms of means testing, such as rent supplement remove rent supplement and replace with 'local authority housing supports' and medical cards, see page 22 & 27 for details. For more information see 'maintenance' at www.treoir.ie.

Contact	Find your local Law Centre: The Legal Aid Board 066 947 1000 www.legalaidboard.ie/en/ contact-us/find-a-law-centre/	District Court Family Law Office Dublin 01 888 6355	Central Authority for Maintenance Recovery Abroad Department of Justice and Equality 51 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland Tel.: +353 (1) 859 2232 e-mail: mainrecov@justice.ie website: http://www.justice.ie
	Find your local District Court office at www.courts.ie		

Establishing paternity / DNA testing

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/information-paternity.php

Where parents are not married to each other and a man's name is on a child's birth certificate then he is presumed to be the father of that child (this does not give the father any legal rights to the child).

It may be necessary, for legal reasons or 'peace of mind', to have a paternity test done where paternity is disputed. If a parent/alleged parent refuses to undergo paternity testing, it may be necessary to go to court. The court may order that paternity testing be carried out as part of a court procedure, for example: access, maintenance and/or guardianship. A judge can draw inference from a refusal to take a DNA test. It is also possible to apply to the Circuit Court for a Declaration of Parentage.

Testing Procedure

Testing is carried out using either blood samples or mouth swabs (inside of mouth) taken from the mother, child and alleged father. Samples are taken by the testing service or it may be possible for the testing service to send a kit to your GP who will then take samples. It is important to note that not all GPs provide this service. Results should be available within 2 - 3 weeks.

Note: Where the father refuses to be named, or the mother refuses to name the father on the child's birth certificate, test results alone are not sufficient evidence to put the father's name on the birth certificate. However a court order for maintenance, access, guardianship or a declaration of parentage can be used as evidence of paternity to put the father's name on the birth certificate.

Having the father's name on your child's birth certificate helps to establish your child's sense of identity as they grow up.

For contact details of some of the paternity testing services see www.treoir.ie

When using a company for DNA testing it is important to make sure it has been approved by an appropriate authority. It is important to note that companies often offer two types of DNA tests – 1) 'peace of mind' tests which are cheaper but will not be accepted by the court, and 2) 'legal' tests which are more expensive and can be used for court purposes.



See 'Establishing Paternity' at www.treoir.ie
Tel: 01 6700 120 Email: info@treoir.ie

Registration of Births

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/information-registration.php

Important things to remember:

- 1 Where possible, it is important for your baby to have the names of both their parents on the birth certificate.
- 2 Having the father's name on the birth certificate does not give him any legal rights to his child. See 'Guardianship' on page 2.
- 3 A child has a right to be financially maintained by both parents and to inherit from them. This applies whether or not the names of both parents are on the birth certificate.
- 4 Where the father's name is on the birth certificate, this does not prevent the mother from getting One-Parent Family Payment.
- 5 Having the father's name on the birth certificate can also be important in relation to the child's right to citizenship. Please note that if an unmarried mother does not have Irish/EU citizenship, but the biological father does, the child may be entitled to citizenship, but the father's name would need to be registered on the birth certificate. A parent of an Irish or EU Citizen may have the right to live in Ireland. For more information on this scenario, please call us on (01) 6700 120.

Your baby should be registered within 3 months of the birth. Register at your local registrar's office. See www.civilregistrationservice.ie to find your local office.

Surnames

Parents can choose

- Mother's surname.
- Father's surname (but only if the father's name is going on the birth certificate and he agrees).
- Both parents' surnames - a double-barrelled surname - hyphenated and in any order (but again, only if the father's name is going on the birth certificate and they agree).

How can the father's name be registered?

- Both parents can register the birth together.
- The mother can complete a declaration form naming the father (Form CRA 1) and bring it along with a declaration by the child's father (Form CRA 3) acknowledging that he is the father of the child. The declaration must be correctly witnessed. The mother then completes the register.
- Alternatively, the father can complete a declaration form acknowledging that they are the father of the child (Form CRA 2) and bring it to the Registrar's Office. They must also bring with them a declaration by the mother, correctly witnessed, naming the father (Form CRA 4). Note that all these forms are only available in the Birth Registration office and not online.
- Either parent can show a copy of a court order naming the father, e.g. access, maintenance or guardianship. You do not need the consent of the other parent but they will be informed. The consent of both parents is required to change the child's surname.

Re-Registration

- If the child has been registered in the mother's name only, it is possible to re-register the birth at any time to have the father's details added. See above.

Birth Registration for Children Conceived Through Donor-Assisted Human Reproduction

If an opposite-sex couple conceived a child through an Irish registered donor-assisted human reproduction clinic with a traceable donor sperm or egg, both people can be registered on the birth certificate. The birth mother will be named as the 'parent' or the 'mother' on the birth certificate, even if she is not the biological parent of the child. If it is the father's sperm or a donor's sperm, he will have the choice to be registered as the 'father' or 'parent' on the birth certificate. If a female same-sex couple conceived through donor-assisted human reproduction, the woman who didn't give birth can be registered as the parent on the birth certificate. These cases can be very specific to a family's circumstances so if you would like to find out more about your family's situation, please call Treoir on 01 6700120 and we would be happy to explain your rights and responsibilities.

The Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2014 will, when commenced, make it compulsory to register the father's name on his child's birth certificate (with some exceptions) and will change much of the information in this section. To keep up-to-date with these changes, visit www.treoir.ie, follow us on Facebook or phone Treoir's information service on 01 670 0120.



for more information see
www.treoir.ie/information-registration.php

Think before you register!

Changing a child's surname

It is possible to change a child's surname on his/her birth cert by:

- **Marriage.** Where the parents marry each other following the birth of their child and they both agree to the change.
- **Re-registration.** The birth is being re-registered to add the father's details and both parents agree to the change.

Changing a child's surname through Deed Poll or Common Usage requires the consent of both guardians.

- **Deed Poll.** The Deed Poll is an official document that shows a person has changed their name. The Deed Poll can be used with the birth certificate as proof of change; however, it is no longer accepted by the Passport Office.
- **Common Usage.** A new name is 'commonly used'. It is possible to use this name on a passport if you can show two formal documents proving you have used this name for at least two years. In the case of a child, documents from their school and GP are considered formal documents.

If you are/were married to a man who is NOT the father of your baby and you want to put the birth father's name on the birth certificate.

In order to proceed you must have a sworn statement from the father swearing he is the father and have either:

- a sworn statement from your husband saying they are not the father
or
- a deed of separation and a sworn statement from you saying you were living apart from your husband for more than 10 months before the birth of your child
or
- an Irish divorce dated or stating that you were living apart from your husband for at least 10 months before your child was born. To make sure a foreign divorce is valid check this out with the General Register Office.
or
- any court order which names the biological father as father, e.g. guardianship, access, maintenance.

Passport applications

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/information-passports.php

Consent to passport applications

Where the mother is a sole guardian, only she is required to sign the Passport Application Form. This applies even if the father's name is on the child's birth certificate. The mother will have to sign an affidavit form (AFF1) in the presence of a Commissioner for Oaths (solicitor) stating that she is the sole guardian. The affidavit form can be downloaded from the 'passports' section at www.treoir.ie.

Where a child has two guardians the signature of each guardian is required on the Passport Application Form (APS 1E). If a child has more than two guardians, the signatures of no more than two guardians are required on the Passport Application Form (note: a court appointed non-parent guardian, e.g step-parent, grandparent, may/may not have been granted the right to consent to a passport).

If a guardian refuses to sign the Passport Application Form then the parent/guardian seeking the passport may apply to the local District Court to request the other guardian's consent be dispensed with.

Passport application forms are available online, the Passport Office, garda stations, most post offices.

- Where one or both parents is an Irish citizen or entitled to be an Irish citizen the long form birth certificate or passport of the Irish parent will be required.
- Where neither parent is an Irish citizen there are different requirements depending on the nationality and/or on where the parents live.

For more information about 'Passports for Children'

See <https://dfa.ie/passports-citizenship/passportsforchildrenfor/>

Only when the father is a joint guardian is his consent required to the passport application for his child.



If you marry after your baby is born

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/information-step-parent-adoption.php



Legal Implications

If both parents of the same child marry each other after the birth, the father, who may not already be a guardian (depending on how long they have cohabited together) becomes a joint guardian of the child. See 'Guardianship' page 2. A married father's guardianship cannot be removed. It is possible to re-register the birth to change the surname of your child where both parents agree. See page 12.

If you marry someone who is **not** the other parent:

- Your spouse has no legal rights to your child. However, it is possible for them to apply for guardianship rights (See page 2).
- New partners of both have the same rights to apply for guardianship rights, provided they meet the other criteria. This is regardless of whether the mother or father are in opposite-sex or same-sex new relationships.
- You can make a will naming your spouse a guardian of your child in the event of your death. This is called Testamentary Guardianship. See page 3.
- It is possible for your spouse to adopt your child. The Adoption Amendments Act 2017 allows for the adoption of a child by their stepparent. For further details contact the Adoption Authority of Ireland or/and TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency at www.tusla.ie
- Adoption is a serious step as it ends all links between your child and their other biological parent and family. You need to think about it carefully.
- A mother's (both married and unmarried) guardianship can only be removed if she puts the child up for adoption.
- The biological father must be consulted about the adoption of his child even if he is not registered on the birth certificate. If the father is a guardian, his consent is required.

If the biological parents marry each other following the birth, the father will become a joint guardian of their child.

Shared parenting where parents are living apart

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/target-shared-parenting.php

Parents are very special to their children.

It is important for children that, where possible, both parents are involved in the parenting. Children need to know that they have two parents and who their parents are, so that they will have a good sense of their own identity.

Talk to your children about the other parent

- Be honest and truthful with your child about issues such as:
 - why you are not living with the other parent
 - who the biological father is, if you have a new partner
- Start telling your child early about the family situation and build on this information as you go along.
- Be positive about the other parent - they must have some good points!
- If you can't be positive, be neutral.
- Let your child know they can ask questions about the other parent.

Tell relatives and staff at the crèche/school about your situation and what your child knows. It is important that you are all dealing with the same facts.

Positive pointers for shared parenting

- Parenting is a job for life and for children there is no such thing as an ex-parent.
- Children recognise the importance of a continuing relationship or link with both parents, no matter how distant or how little the contact.
- Remember that it is not adding people to children's lives but taking important people away that is hard for children to accept.
- Listen well to children – it is important for them to know they are being heard.
- Most important of all, be positive about your children. They are unique and important human beings. A child's confidence and self-esteem blossoms when they hear good things about themselves, and the people close to them.

It is important that your child feels loved by both parents and can feel free to love both of you as parents.

Children recognise the importance of a continuing relationship or link with both parents, no matter how distant or how little the contact.



Mediation

Mediation allows parents to be in charge of their own decisions.

If you are having difficulty in agreeing parenting issues you might think about mediation. Mediation is where a third party, a mediator, attempts to help parents reach agreement and to work out arrangements concerning their children. Mediation may not be appropriate for every situation.

- Mediation helps parents to be in charge of their own decisions.
- Both parents must be willing to discuss things and to allow for a bit of give and take.
- Mediation promotes good communication and co-operation between parents.
- Parents are helped to remain as partners in parenting.
- An agreement made through mediation can be made a rule of court. This means that it is made legally binding in the same way as a court order.
- It is usually better if parents can reach their own decisions instead of a court making decisions for them.

Find your nearest free-of-charge mediation service listed on legalaiddboard.ie or phone 01 874 7446.

To access a fee-based mediation service contact the Mediators Institute of Ireland on **01 609 9190** or visit themii.ie

Dublin Community Mediation provides free mediation to parents, and it is available online to parents who are not based in Dublin.

Unplanned Pregnancy Support Services

An unplanned pregnancy may leave you feeling worried and confused. You may or may not have many conflicting and strong feelings about your pregnancy.

Unplanned pregnancy counselling can support you to cope with your unplanned pregnancy. It can help to talk to someone who can help support you to find the answers to your questions.

My Options free phone line

My Options is a HSE freephone line that provides free and confidential information and counselling to people experiencing an unplanned pregnancy.

How to contact My Options:

Phone

Freephone: 1800 828 010

Outside of the Republic of Ireland: 00353 59 916 5066

Information and counselling

Monday to Thursday: 9am to 8pm

Friday: 9am to 7pm

Saturday: 10am to 2pm

Medical advice

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Irish Sign Language

Book an appointment through the Irish Remote Interpreting Service to access the service using sign language.

Irish Text Relay Service

This service helps people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired to make and receive calls independently. Book an appointment through Irish Text Relay Service.

Webchat

[Contact My Options by webchat here for information and support.](#)

When in contact through webchat you will be asked for your phone number if you need:

- Contact details of GPs who provide abortion services
- Medical advice from the nursing team

This is so a call back can be arranged with the information you need.

My Options does not record calls as per its privacy policy.



Irish Sign Language

Book an appointment to access the service using sign language through Irish Remote Interpreting Service.

If you phone My Options counselling service outside of opening times or if all counsellors are busy, you can leave a message. A counsellor will phone you back during opening times. They will return your call as soon as they can, ideally on the day, but certainly within 24 hours. My Options will attempt to contact you twice.

My Options will support you through an unplanned pregnancy, no matter what option you choose.

If you or someone you know doesn't speak English

If you don't speak English My Options can provide you with an interpreter. They will help you speak to a My Options counsellor over the telephone in your own language.

My Options can provide an interpreter for 240 different languages. This service is free and confidential. If you would like to speak to a My Options counsellor using an interpreter, call them on freephone 1800 828 010.

You or someone on your behalf will need to:

- tell My Options what language you speak
- give them your phone number



How My Options can help

My Options helpline can provide you with information and support on all your options, including continued pregnancy supports and abortion services.

They can provide you with counselling over the phone. They can also provide you with information on free face-to-face counselling.
Freephone 1800 828 010

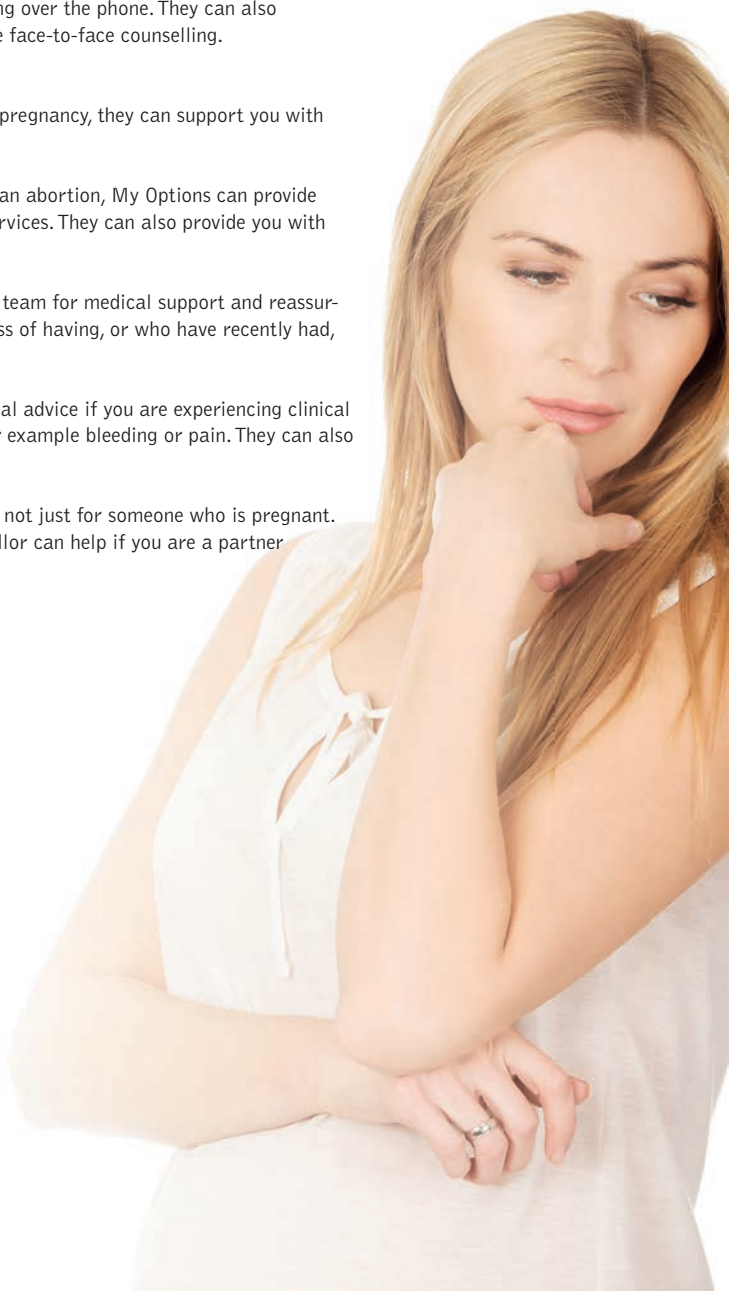
If you choose to continue with your pregnancy, they can support you with this option.

If you decide that you want to have an abortion, My Options can provide you with information on abortion services. They can also provide you with post-abortion support.

My Options provides a 24/7 nursing team for medical support and reassurance to people who are in the process of having, or who have recently had, an abortion.

The nursing team can provide medical advice if you are experiencing clinical symptoms following an abortion, for example bleeding or pain. They can also advise on when to go to a doctor.

Unplanned pregnancy counselling is not just for someone who is pregnant. Speaking with a My Options counsellor can help if you are a partner of someone who is pregnant.



Money during pregnancy

If you are not working:

- Make direct contact with your local Social Welfare/Intreo Centre and check what you may be entitled to, for example, Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit.
- Bring your birth certificate with you.

Apply to your local Intreo Centre* as you may be entitled to:

- Supplementary Welfare Allowance
- Medical Card / G.P. Visit Card
- Rent Supplement
- Once-off payment for exceptional expenses

*find your local Intreo Centre at www.welfare.ie

If you are working:

- You may qualify for Maternity Benefit if you have paid enough Social Insurance Contributions (check with the Maternity Benefit Section). See below.
- You must apply for Maternity Benefit at least 6 weeks before you intend to go on Maternity Leave.
- You may also be entitled to Health and Safety Benefit Leave if there is a risk for you in your work while you are pregnant or breastfeeding and your employer cannot remove the risk or give you alternative risk-free duties.

How much Maternity Benefit will I get?

If you qualify for Maternity Benefit you will get €289 (from Jan 2025) per week. Some employers will continue to pay an employee in full while on Maternity Leave. Check with your employer.

Maternity Benefit will be taxed. However you will not pay PRSI or Universal Social Charge.

You can get Maternity Benefit for the 26 weeks of Maternity Leave.

If you are already receiving One-Parent Family Payment you may still be entitled to half rate Maternity Benefit if you satisfy the contribution conditions.



Medical care Maternity / Paternity / Parental leave

Medical care

Ante-natal care (before birth) and post-natal (after birth) in the public health system is free to all women ordinarily resident in Ireland. Non medical card holders may have to pay some charges.

Ante/Post Natal Leave

- You are entitled to take paid time off to attend ante-natal appointments.
- You are entitled to take paid time off to attend one set of ante-natal classes for one pregnancy only.
- You are entitled to take paid time off for medical visits related to the pregnancy for 14 weeks after the birth.
- Fathers are entitled to paid time off to attend two ante-natal classes as a once off, i.e. for one pregnancy only.

Maternity leave

- You are entitled to Maternity Leave no matter how recently you have started work or how many hours you work per week.
- You are entitled to 26 weeks Maternity Leave.
- You can also take an additional 16 weeks Maternity Leave, but you won't get Maternity Benefit for these extra 16 weeks. See page 20.

Paternity leave / Benefit

- Fathers and same-sex parents are entitled to two weeks paternity leave and two weeks paternity benefit. This leave can be taken anytime within the first six months of the baby's birth. Paternity benefit will be paid at a rate of €277 per week (Jan 2025), the same as maternity benefit, and will be based on the PRSI contribution requirement.
- For more information visit www.treoir.ie/information-money.php

Parents Benefit

Parent's Benefit is for parents in the first two years after their child's birth or adoption. You must be on Parent's Leave to get Parent's Benefit. Each parent is entitled to Parent's Benefit during Parent's Leave. Since August 2024, you can take nine consecutive weeks or five separate weeks of leave before your child turns two years old.

Parental Leave

- A parent is entitled to 26 weeks unpaid parental leave per child. The leave must be taken before the child is 12 years old. The leave maybe broken-up with the agreement of the employer.

For more information on benefits contact:

Client Eligibility Services on 01 471 5898, www.gov.ie

Money if you are **not** working outside the home following the birth of your baby

One-Parent Family Payment (OFP)

- You are entitled to One Parent Family payment (OFP) if you have one child below the age of seven, however there are some exceptions to this. The conditions are:
- Have the main care of your child
- Are not cohabiting
- Satisfy the means test - See page 26
- Satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition - See page 33
- The basic rate is €244, and each qualified child rate is €50 for under 12's and €62 for over 12's (Jan 2025).

Your entitlement to OFP is not affected:

- By having the father's name on the birth certificate
- If you are living at home with your family
- If you are still at school or college.
- If you receive child maintenance from the other parent.

Things you should know about maintenance payments:

- You will not be required to seek maintenance from the liable relative to be eligible for One-Parent Family Payment or Jobseeker's Transitional Payment. Child maintenance is no longer counted as means for any social welfare benefit.
- * Child maintenance is still counted as means for housing supports such as HAP, RAS, or local authority rent.

For more information on Rent Supplement see: www.gov.ie



Other Entitlements

Child Benefit - €140 per month for each child under 16 years of age or 19 if the child is in full-time education

The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE)

Children will be able to start ECCE (free pre-school) when they reach 2 years and 8 months of age and continue until they transfer to primary school (provided that they are not older than 5 years and 6 months at the end of the pre-school year). There will be only one entry point to the ECCE scheme from September 2018.

Download the Early Childhood Ireland ECCE Guide for Parents at <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ECCE-Guide-For-Parents-2022-4.pdf>

The Department of Children supports programmes to help parents access early learning and care, and school-age childcare. Your local childcare committee can inform you of your options. To find out which services offer programmes in your area see: myccc.ie/i-am-a-parent-information-on-programmes

The website of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth has further information on the ECCE scheme.

Newborn baby grant €280 (Jan 2025), so the first child benefit payment will be €420.

Children with special needs

If your child needs additional support, your pre-school provider can apply, in partnership with you, for targeted supports under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

For further information on this model see:

www.pobal.ie/programmes/access-and-inclusion-model-aim/

For advice and support from the Early Years Specialist Service (Access and Inclusion) contact (01) 511 7222 or e-mail: onlinesupport@pobal.ie

You may also qualify for:

- Medical Card / G.P. Visit Card
- Rent Supplement (see page 27)
- Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) see page 28
- Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance
- Exceptional Needs Payment

Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) is a monthly payment for a child under 16 with a severe disability. The child must require ongoing care and attention substantially above that which is usually required by a child of the same age. From Jan 2025, the monthly allowance is €360, it is not means tested. You can also read the information leaflet for DCA (SW127). The leaflet is available from your Intreo Centre or Citizens Information Service.

Appeals - If you think you have been wrongly refused a payment or are unhappy with a decision you have 21 days to lodge an appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

To find a childcare provider near you, contact your local City or County Childcare Committee at: myccc.ie/i-am-a-parent--information-on-programmes

All payments are subject to the Habitual Residence Condition. See page 33.

Money if you are working outside the home following the birth of your baby

One-Parent Family Payment (OFP)

You are entitled to One-Parent Family Payment (OFP) if you:

- Have at least one child below the age of seven.
- Have the main care of your child.
- Are not cohabiting.
- Satisfy the means test - See below.
- Satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition - See page 33.

When your youngest child turns seven you move to Job seekers transition payment (JST).

Means Test: What counts as means?

Income

The first €165 of weekly earnings is disregarded – so it won't affect your OFP. Half the remainder of your gross earnings per week (there is no upper cap), is assessed as means.

Means Test

Working family payment – Income thresholds for Working Family Payment will increase by €60 per week from Jan 2025.

Savings

The first €20,000 is disregarded and the rest is assessed.

Additional Supports

- You will get **Child Benefit** no matter what you are earning. See page 24.
- **Back to Work Family Dividend of €50 for a child under 12 and €62 for a child over 12 (Jan 2025)**, may be available for those coming off OFP.
- You can keep your Medical Card / G.P. Visit Card for 3 years if you have been getting OFP for at least 12 months before taking up work no matter how much you earn.
- The Affordable Childcare Scheme (more details at affordablechildcare.ie and dcya.gov.ie)
- The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE). See page 24.

Working Family Payment

Working Family Payment is a tax-free weekly payment. You may qualify if you are working at least 19 hours a week on low pay. The weekly income threshold increased in January 2024 by €54, regardless of family size to €645 (based on one child). Wages after tax, OFP and maintenance must be less than €591 per week. The rate is higher if there are more children. A maintenance disregard of €95.23 applies in respect of housing costs, while the remainder is assessed at 50%.



Rent Supplement is a means-tested payment for certain people living in private rented accommodation who are unable to pay the cost of their accommodation from their own resources due to unemployment or other circumstances.

Rent Supplement and Domestic Violence

Victims of domestic violence referred from Tusla-funded services, An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive (HSE) can get immediate access to Rent Supplement. The means-test for Rent Supplement will not apply for 3 months.

Rent Supplement can be extended for a further 3 months, but the means-test will apply. After this 6 month period, if the person has a long term housing need, they can apply to their local housing authority for social housing supports and access the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), if eligible.

To apply for Rent Supplement you should contact the Community Welfare Officer (CWO) at your local Community Welfare Service.

If you are not working

To qualify you must have been renting for six out of the last twelve months, or have been in accommodation for homeless persons for six out of the last twelve months. You must also satisfy the habitual residence condition (see page 33). To apply contact your local Intreo Centre or visit www.welfare.ie.

If you qualify for Rent Supplement you must still pay at least €30 a week towards your rent. Couples must pay a minimum of €40. In the past, you could apply for Rent Supplement if you qualified for social housing support and were on a local authority housing list. However, people in this situation should now apply for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) from their local city/county council. For details see www.hap.ie

Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

RAS is a social housing support introduced to cater for the accommodation needs of persons who are in receipt of long-term rent supplement (usually 18 months or more) For more details on this scheme contact your local authority listed at:

www.housing.gov.ie/local-government/administration/local-authorities/local-authorities



Other Housing Support

Housing Assistance Payment

HAP is a form of social housing support provided by all local authorities. Under HAP, local authorities will make a monthly payment to a landlord, subject to terms and conditions including rent limits, on a HAP tenant's behalf. In return, the HAP tenant pays a weekly contribution towards the rent to the local authority. This 'rent contribution' is based on the household income. It is calculated in the same way as the rent paid by a tenant of a local authority owned property.

Who is eligible for HAP?

- A household that qualifies for social housing support and who is not currently housed by their local authority.
- Your local authority can determine your eligibility for social housing support and HAP
- To qualify for HAP, a household must be qualified for social housing support by their local authority, which means the household must qualify to go on the local authority housing waiting list.
- HAP tenants must find their own accommodation in the private rented market (this is the same as the current Rent Supplement scheme).
- The landlord must agree to rent their property to the HAP tenant.
- The local authority will make a monthly payment to the landlord. This payment is made on the last Wednesday of each month. The payment is subject to terms and conditions including rent limits, and that the HAP tenant pays their rent contribution to the local authority.
- The HAP tenant pays their rent contribution to the local authority. Rent contributions will generally be made through An Post's Household Budget Scheme. If the HAP tenant does not pay this rent contribution, HAP payments to their landlord will be suspended and eventually stopped. The HAP tenant is then responsible for paying the full rent themselves.



Appealing a decision

If you are not satisfied with a decision made in relation to Rent Supplement, you should first find out why the decision was made. If you are still dissatisfied you can appeal by emailing swappeals@welfare.ie or via your local Intreo Centre

For more information on Rent Supplement see: www.gov.ie

For the Housing Assistance Payment see: www.hap.ie

It is illegal for a landlord to refuse to take HAP or to discriminate against a person in receipt of HAP.

Contacts

For information on tenant rights contact Threshold:

Freephone: 1800 454 454

Webchat: threshold.ie

www.threshold.ie/advice/help

Income tax / Universal Social Charge

You are entitled to:

- Your own personal Tax Credit of €2000 from Jan 2025.
- Single Person Child Carer Credit of €1900 from Jan 2025.

*This tax credit is only available if you are not cohabiting or living with a civil partner/spouse. The tax credit is payable only to the main carer of the child. If the main carer is not working it may be possible to give this credit to the other carer/parent. See www.revenue.ie.

It is possible to have tax credits back-dated (four years maximum) if they have not been claimed.

You will be taxed at the rate of 20% for the first €39,300 you earn and the rest at 40%. Maternity benefit is taxable.

One Parent Family Payment is taxable. Working Family Payment is not taxable.

If you are the parent or guardian of a child with a disability, you may be eligible to apply for the incapacitated child tax credit, from Jan 2025, this credit is €3800 per year.

Universal Social Charge (USC)

You will pay a Universal Social Charge on your gross income (income before tax). Income of €13,000 or less is exempt from USC. If your income exceeds this limit you will pay the relevant rate of USC on all your income.

Standard rate of USC in 2025

- Standard rate of USC in 2025
- Income up to €12,012 will be taxed at 0.5%
- Income between €12,012 and €27,382 is taxed at 2%
- Income between €27,382 to €70,044 at 4%
- Income over €70,044 is taxed at 8%
- If you have a full medical card, a USC rate of 2% applies to income under €60,000

Social Welfare payments are exempt from the Universal Social Charge.

If you have a full medical card and earn more than €12,012 per year you will pay USC rates of 0.5% on income up to €12,012 and 2% on any income over that amount.





Opportunities in education and training

If you are still in secondary school

You are entitled to apply for One-parent Family Payment (OFP) even if you are still at school provided you satisfy the application conditions. View more details at <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/d15f58-home-tuition/>

A new single National Childcare Scheme (NCS) has been developed to replace a number of childcare programmes including CETS.

You can find more information on the scheme on [ncs.gov.ie](https://www.ncs.gov.ie). You can read frequently asked questions about the National Childcare Scheme.

You are entitled to a Home Tuition Grant for students on maternity related absences. You may avail of 90 hours of Home Tuition spread over 6 months according to your needs before and after the birth of your baby. You may attend school part-time while availing of the Scheme. View more details on 'Home Tuition Grants' with the Department of Education and Skills at: www.bit.ly/2YnsPgQ

If you have already left secondary school

If you are aged 15-20 years and did not finish secondary school, Youthreach offers training, work experience and certification up to Leaving Certificate Applied. View more details at <https://www.ddletb.ie/youth/youthreach/>

If you are a parent and getting the Back to Education Allowance, you will receive an Annual Cost of Education Allowance of €500.

If you are a lone parent and are 18 years of age and over and would like to go back and finish secondary school, or attend a community, comprehensive or vocational school, you can switch from OFP (after 3 months). There is no longer a requirement for lone parents aged 18 to be out of education for two years to qualify for BTEA.

If you wish to pursue a third level course, and you are in receipt of OPF or JST, you can apply for back to education allowance BTEA, or stay on your current payment and apply for SUSI, whichever benefits you more.

You cannot apply for the SUSI maintenance grant if you are in receipt of BTEA or VTOS, only the fees grant. For further information on the eligibility criteria for SUSI, please visit <https://1916bursary.ie>.

If you are on BTEA you may be entitled to rent supplement. If you are a full-time student on another social welfare payment, you will not qualify for rent supplement.

Student finance

If you are in receipt of BTEA you can keep your medical card/G.P. visit card and Rent Supplement. View more details on BTEA at <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/418e3f-back-to-education-allowance/>

Vocational Training Opportunities

If you are over 21 and receiving OFP for 6 months you can apply for a Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS). There are no fees, books are free and you may get a small travel allowance and a free child- care place. View more details at www.qualifax.ie

For details of training courses or community employment schemes view:
www.localemploymentservices.ie and www.solas.ie

If you are already in third level education

If you are already attending or planning to attend third level education in 2023/2025 and are in receipt of a social welfare benefit (OFP, BTEA) you may be eligible for a 1916 Bursary of €5000 per year for the duration of the course. If eligible you may receive this in addition to a SUSI grant. Bursaries will be awarded to students (new entrants) who have been identified by participating Higher Education Institutions as meeting the eligibility criteria. At least 20% of the bursaries must be targeted at lone parents.

Who can apply for the 1916 bursary?

- First-time entrants to higher education in approved institutions
- Undergraduate students on NFQ level 6-8, major award courses
- Full or part-time students
- Students from eligible target groups i.e., lone parents, members of the Traveller Community, ethnic minorities, and people with a disability.

View more details at: www.bit.ly/31byHXq

In addition, www.uversity.org offers financial support to individuals 23 years or older who wish to pursue a BA degree in any subject in one of the participating institutions.

Childcare

There are several subsidised childcare schemes, depending on your circumstances, to support your return to education or training. The level of subsidy and conditions change frequently.

For up-to-date information view:

The National Childcare Scheme on ncs.gov.ie. or the Childcare section on <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/5ab17-childcare/>

Dept. of Education and Skills www.education.ie	Young Parent Support Programme www.youngparents.ie	Education and Training Boards Ireland. www.etbi.ie	www.studentfinance.ie
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Habitual Residence Condition

Habitual Residence is a condition you must satisfy in order to qualify for certain social welfare payments.

These payments include:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Child Benefit
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance (other than once-off Exceptional and Urgent Needs Payments)

Habitual Residence means you have proven close links to Ireland or other parts of the Common Travel Area*. The most important factors for providing this link are:

- Length and continuity of residence in Ireland or elsewhere
- The length and purpose of any absence from Ireland
- Nature and pattern of employment
- Main centre of interest
- Future intentions

*The Common Travel Area is Ireland, Great Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

EU Regulations and Habitual Residence

EU/EEA citizens and Swiss nationals who are employed or self-employed in Ireland and subject to the Irish Social Insurance system do not have to satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition to qualify for Family Benefits. The following Irish social welfare payments are regarded as Family Benefits under EU Regulations

- One-Parent Family Payment
- Guardian's Payment (Non-Contributory)
- Working Family Payment
- Child Benefit
- Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE)

Habitual Residence is a condition which you must satisfy in order to qualify for certain social welfare payments.



For information see
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/170e70-habitual-residence-condition/>



Child abduction

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/information/abduction.php

It is an offence for any person including a parent or guardian to take or send a child under 16 years out of the State:

- (a) in defiance of a court order or
- (b) without the consent of each person who is a guardian or
- (c) without the consent of a person to whom custody of the child has been granted by a court, unless the court grants permission.

The consent of a parent who is not a guardian is not required. However, if that parent has applied to court for guardianship, and a summons has been served, the child cannot be taken out of the country unless the court grants permission.

In a situation where a child is removed within Ireland contact your local Gardaí. In general, these situations will be dealt with in your local District Court as part of custody/access proceedings.

For further information contact your local Garda station and/or the Central Authority for Child Abduction in the Department of Justice and Equality

It is an offence for a parent or guardian to take a child under 16 years out of the State without the consent of the other Guardian or in defiance of a court order.

Domestic violence

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/information-domestic-violence.php

Domestic violence can be physical, emotional, sexual, psychological and financial abuse. It can happen to anyone at any time. If you are being abused or think you are being abused, you are not alone. It is not your fault and help is available. You can contact your local gardaí, Women’s Aid, Safe Ireland, Men’s Aid and/or your local refuge. Remember, it is important to talk to someone you trust be it a friend, a family member, or your local garda. All of the orders listed below are available to opposite and same sex people – you do not have to live with someone (cohabit) to get an order. Victims of Domestic violence now have a legal right to five days paid leave from work if they need to take time off work because of the abuse, this is covered under the work life balance and miscellaneous provisions Act 2023.

Barring Order

- You can apply for a barring order if your partner is being violent towards you. No minimum period of cohabitation is required.
- A barring order requires the violent person to leave the family home, unless that person owns the family home in full or has greater rights than you to the home.
- A barring order can last up to 3 years and can be renewed.
- You may also apply for an **interim barring order** or **emergency barring order** where there are reasonable grounds for believing that you are at an immediate risk of significant harm and the granting of a protection order would not offer sufficient protection (see below). Unlike an interim barring order, the emergency barring order applicant does not have to satisfy the property test to be able to get an emergency barring order. This means the person applying for the order does not need to own, co-own or have their name on the lease of the property. They both last a maximum of 8 working days.

Safety Order

- A parent can apply for a safety order if you need protection from the other parent whether you have ever lived with them or not.
- A safety order prohibits the violent person from further acts of violence or threats of violence.
- It does not oblige that person to leave the family home.
- A safety order can last up to 5 years and can be renewed.

Protection Order

- You can apply for a protection order while you are waiting for the court to decide on your application for either a safety or barring order.
- A protection order prohibits the violent person from further acts of violence or threats of violence. It does not require the violent person to leave the home.
- This is a temporary order but will have immediate effect.

If you get any of the above court orders and the violent person breaks it, then the Gardaí can arrest and charge that person. To apply for an order you must go to your local District Court office (see Courts Service below). Incidents of domestic violence can be reported at your local Garda Station.

Contact	Local Garda Station www.garda.ie	Women's Aid Freephone: 1800 341 900 Email: helpline@womensaid.ie	Cosc - The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic Sexual and Gender based Violence www.cosc.ie	Men's Aid Support for male victims of domestic violence 01 5543811 Email: hello@mensaid.ie
	Courts Service 01 888 6355 www.courts.ie	Could you be in an abusive relationship? See toointoyou.ie .		For a list of support services around the country see: www.safeireland.ie



Harassment

for more information see: www.treoir.ie/information-harassment.php



It is an offence
to harass a person

Harassment

Harassment may be as a result of persistent communication with a person, but it can now also be persistent communication about a person, sometimes referred to as indirect harassment. This offence will carry a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment to reflect the serious nature of harassment and the wide range of behaviours it represents.

The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 was brought into force in February 2021. The Act amends the law relating to harassment and creates new offences to deal with the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, both online and offline provides anonymity for the victims of those offences.

Section 28 4(c) of the Criminal Justice (miscellaneous provisions) Act 2023 allows a court to impose an exclusion order on a person suspected of stalking, which covers the victims home, education, and workplace.

Coercive Control

Coercive Control is a persistent pattern of controlling, coercive and threatening behaviour including all or some forms of domestic abuse (emotional, physical, financial, sexual including threats) by a boyfriend/girlfriend, partner, husband/wife or ex-partner.

This can have a serious impact including the fear of violence, cause serious alarm and distress and can result in a person giving up work, changing their routines, losing contact with family and friends. Coercive control can damage a person's physical and emotional well-being.

Coercive control can be difficult to detect from the outside looking into a relationship, so too can it be hard to spot when in the relationship itself. As the behaviour worsens and each iteration of abuse becomes a new normal, low self-esteem is just one of the many factors that can stop victims from seeing the reality of their situation.

Since January 2019 coercive control is a criminal offence.

The following types of behaviour are common examples of coercive control:

- isolating you from your friends and family
- controlling how much money you have and how you spend it
- monitoring your activities and your movements
- repeatedly putting you down, calling you names or telling you that you are worthless
- threatening to harm or kill you or your child
- threatening to publish information about you or to report you to the gardaí or the authorities
- damaging your property or household goods

If any of these issues affect you, and you need to talk to someone, you can reach Women's Aid at 1800 341 900 or at www.womensaid.ie, and Men's Aid at 01 5543811 or at www.mensaid.ie. For your Local Garda Station see www.garda.ie

The Young Parents Support Programme

What Is The Young Parents Support Programme?

The Young Parents Support Programme - YPSP for short - is a family support service for young people who are pregnant or parenting. Support is also available for partners and those family members who play an important part in your life. This support service is free and confidential. Young parents can be supported through the YPSP.



There are twelve different projects across Ireland available to young people in the following locations:

- Carlow
- Clare
- Cork
- Dublin – Dublin South - Dublin 24, 12 and parts of Dublin 6, Ballyfermot, Bluebell and Inchicore - Dublin North - Dublin 5, 13, 17 and parts of 3 and 9, and Finglas
- Donegal
- Galway
- Kildare
- Kilkenny
- Limerick
- Louth – Dundalk and Drogheda
- Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan
- Tipperary
- Wexford – and parts of Waterford
- Westmeath

How Can I Contact The YPSP?

You can contact the YPSP directly or anyone interested in your well-being, or the well-being of your child, may make contact on your behalf.

How Does The YPSP Work?

A project worker will meet you to discuss your needs and concerns and will support you to deal with them as far as possible. You can meet the project worker on your own, as a couple, with a member of your family or with anyone who is supporting you. Meetings may take place in your own home, at the YPSP office or wherever you feel comfortable. You will be supported in a way that best suits your individual needs and the needs of your child. This may be on a one-to-one basis, through group activities or by putting you in contact with other sources of support.

What Kind Of Support Will I Get?

The type of support you will get will depend on your own individual needs and the needs of your child.

For example, you may need:

- to talk about how your pregnancy is affecting you and your relationships with those around you - such as the other parent of your child and your own parents
- support to take care of yourself and your baby both before and after the birth
- help to adjust to your new roles and responsibilities as a parent
- help to understand how your child is developing and what you can do to make sure he or she is healthy, happy and safe
- information about your rights and responsibilities as a father or a mother
- information and support about your welfare rights and entitlements including accommodation
- encouragement and support to remain in or return to education/training - if that is your choice
- support as a young father to get your rights in relation to your child and to have contact with them
- contact with other young parents in your area.

The YPSP project worker will know the other supports and services for parents like you in your area and, if you wish, can put you in touch with them, talk to them on your behalf or introduce you to them.

Kinship Care

Kinship Care is when a child or young person is cared for by a relative or family friend, because they are not able to live with their parents. If you are a grandparent, aunt, uncle, older brother, or sister, relative or family friend, who is raising a child who is unable to live with their parents, you are a kinship carer.

Most children are in the care of their relatives or family network, because their parents are unable, or unavailable to care for them, due to circumstances such as parental drug or alcohol misuse, imprisonment, parental physical or mental health issues. Kinship care can also arise from the death of a parent. As such, children and young people in kinship care have often experienced early trauma, chaos, crisis and loss and may need specific supports to help them to thrive.



Kinship Care can be part of a formal arrangement, where a relative is 'fostering' the child, or informal, when the family member or friend steps in voluntarily, perhaps because Social Workers ask for them to be part of a 'private family arrangement'.

When you become a Kinship Carer, as well as building a positive, nurturing relationship with the children and young people in your care, you will need to carefully consider the responsibilities involved and the potential effects on your household, of supporting additional family members.

Depending on how your kinship family is formed, there are different routes through which to secure your legal relationship with and responsibility for the children and young people in your care, to ensure that their rights can be exercised and protected.

To seek access to legal advice and/or representation, see:
www.legalaidboard.ie/en/contact-us/find-a-law-centre/

Currently, there are limited financial supports available to informal kinship carers. Child Benefit is a monthly payment made to parents or guardians of children under 16 years of age, or up to 18 if they are in full-time education or full-time training or have a disability and cannot support themselves.

If you are taking full-time care of a child who is regarded as an 'orphan', they may also qualify for the Guardian's Payment.

For more information on the Guardian's Payment, see:
www.gov.ie/en/service/709bab-guardians-payment/

Kinship Care, based in Treoir provides information and support to kinship carers and to those who work closely with kinship families.

Contact Kinship Care in Treoir

Call or Text: 087 1487124 Email: info@kinshipcare.ie Web: www.kinshipcare.ie



Useful contacts

The Adoption Authority of Ireland

01 230 9300
www.aai.gov.ie

Barnardos National Office (M)*

01 453 0355
Email: info@barnardos.ie
www.barnardos.ie

Childhood Matters

Pre and post natal accommodation and support
Ph: 021-422 2987 / 435 7730 / 087-1096373
Website: www.childhood-matters.ie
Email: mtwomey@childhood-matters.ie

Citizens Information Phone Service

LoCall 0818 074000
Email: information@citizeninformation.ie
Clarecare, Clare (M)*

Department of Social Protection

Tel: 01 704 3860

Doras Bui, Dublin 17 (M)*

A parents alone resource centre
01 848 4811
Email: info@dorasbui.ie
www.dorasbui.ie

Family Advocacy Service, Limerick

Support for families with children in care
061 314 111

Family Life Centre, Boyle

071 966 3000
Email: info@familylifecentre.ie
www.familylifecentre.ie

Service for children and young people

Familibase Support for families in Dublin 10 (M)*
01 654 6800 Email: info@familibase.ie
www.facebook.com/FamiliBase

Family Mediation Service 01 874 7446
See www.legalaidboard.ie to find your local mediation service.

Focus Ireland (Housing)

Dublin 01 881 5900
Cork 021 427 3646
Kilkenny 056 779 4565
Limerick 061 405300
Sligo 071 915 6874
Waterford 051 879 810
www.focusireland.ie

FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centre)

01 906 1010
www.flac.ie

Foróige (M)*

National youth organisation
01 630 1560
Email: info@foroige.ie
www.foroige.ie

HSE Sexual Wellbeing Programme

1800 828 010
www.sexualwellbeing.ie

HSE National Information Service

LoCall 1800 700 700
01 240 8787
www.hse.ie

Immigrant Council of Ireland, Dublin 2

01 674 0200
www.immigrantcouncil.ie

Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP)

01 230 3536
Email: iacp@iacp.ie
www.iacp.ie

Kinship Care Ireland

087 148 7124
Email: info@kinshipcare.ie
www.kinshipcare.ie

Legal Aid Board

Head Office: 066 947 1000
Dublin Office: 01 646 9600
Email: info@legalaidboard.ie

Limerick Social Services Council, (M)*

061 314 111
Email: info@lssc.ie
www.lssc.ie

Men's Aid, Dublin (M)*

01 5543811
Email: hello@mensaid.ie

MABS (Money Advice & budgeting Service)

LoCall: 0818 072000
www.mabs.ie

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)

083 0755 387
info@mrci.ie

My Options Freephone Line

Freephone: 1800 828 010
Outside of the Republic of Ireland + 353 59 913 8175
www.myoptions.ie

National Infertility Support and Information Group (NISIG)

Provides support, information and advocacy for all those on their fertility journey
Helpline: 087 7975058 (text anytime)
Email: contact@nisig.com
Website: www.nisig.com - live webchat Monday and Thursday evenings. Monthly peer support meetings - see our social media for dates (Twitter and Instagram @NISIG)

One Family, Dublin 7

01 662 9212
Email: info@onefamily.ie

Rainbows, Dublin 12 (M)*

Peer support groups for children affected by bereavement, divorce or separation of someone close to them. Ages 7-18.
Rainbows National Office 01 473 4175
Email: ask@rainbowsireland.com
www.rainbowsireland.ie

Ringsend and Irishtown Community Centre (M)*

016604789
Email: theofficericc@gmail.com
www.ricc.ie

Solas

Further Education and Training Authority
01 533 2500
Email: info@solas.ie
www.solas.ie

St. Brigid's Family & Community Centre Waterford

051 375 261
Email: stbrigidsfcc@eircom.net
www.stbrigidsfcc.ie

St. Anne's Day Nursery, Cork (M)*

021 432 3304
Email: stannesdaynursery@yahoo.com

St. Catherine's Community Services

St Catherine's, Carlow
059 913 8700
Email: info@catherines.ie
www.catherines.ie

Threshold (Housing)

National Advice Service 1800 454 454
www.threshold.ie

The Doula Association of Ireland

Promoting support from skilled doulas.
W: www.doula.ie
P: 085 834 7028

Treoir, Dublin 1

National Information Service for unmarried parents
28 North Great Georges Street, Dublin 1,
D01 HY 46 01 6700 120
Email: info@treoir.ie
www.treoir.ie

North Barnardos Wexford & Enniscorthy

053 923 6342 or 086 174 9260

Young Parent Support Programme

National Co-ordinator

28 North Great Georges Street
Dublin 1
01 670 0120 or 087 251 8428
Email: sam@ypsp.ie
www.youngparents.ie
The YPSP offers support to pregnant and parenting young people and is available in the following locations:

Carlow / Kilkenny / South Tipperary

059 913 8700 or 085 110 1511

Cork 021 422 2987 or 087 6171055

Donegal 086 606 4291

Dublin

Ballyfermot, Bluebell & Inchicore

01 654 6800 or 086 795 4814

Dublin 5, 13 & 17, and parts of Dublin 3 & 9

01 848 4811 or 087 051 6529

Dublin 24, 12 and parts of Dublin 6

01 403 2081 or 086 7728619

Finglas 01 864 4040 or 086 0600546

Galway 091 544 960 or 086 171 8646

Limerick 061 314 111 or 086 602 0588

Louth 087 689 9002 / 041 2515 2338

North Wexford & Enniscorthy 053 923 6342

Clare 086 0270 899

Kildare 086 203 1882

Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan 087 979 1979

Westmeath/Longford 090 647 6422 / 086 739 7663

Womens Aid

1800 341 900
Phone: 01 6788858
Email: helpline@womensaid.ie
Other useful addresses are listed throughout the booklet.

ARC Family Resource Centre (M)*

Support for families in Adamstown, Raheen, Clonroche, in Wexford.
Phone: 051 442888
Website: www.arcfrc.ie
Email: hello@arcfrc.ie

For local information contact your local Citizens Information Centre, Health Service Executive or Youth Information Centre.

Other useful addresses are listed throughout the booklet.
For local information contact your local Citizens Information Centre, Health Service Executive or Youth Information Centre.

***(M) Member agency of Treoir**

Treoir Information Leaflets

Guardianship

Access and custody

Rights of unmarried fathers

Cohabiting parents

Maintenance

Establishing paternity / DNA Testing

You are a Kinship Carer

Information Booklet

Birth registration

Passport applications

International Child Abduction

Shared parenting

Explaining family relationships

Step-parent adoption

Female Same Sex Couples and Donor Assisted Reproduction

Funded by the HSE Sexual Wellbeing Programme

All publications can be downloaded from www.treoir.ie

or order from Treoir 01 670 0120

info@treoir.ie (free of charge)

www.treoir.ie/media/publications/leaflet-order-form/

My Options

HSE led My Options is a Freephone line and webchat service that provides free and confidential information and counselling to people experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. My Options also provides post abortion counselling.

www.myoptions.ie

The logo for My Options is a blue speech bubble with the text "My Options" in white, sans-serif font inside it.

Busy Bodies Booklet

Information for 5th and 6th class students on the physical and emotional changes during puberty.

To order any of the above resources visit www.healthpromotion.ie



sexualwellbeing.ie



The HSE Sexual Wellbeing programme implements a strategy to address the issue of crisis pregnancy in Ireland. For more information, visit www.myoptions.ie.

The opinions/views outlined in this document are not necessarily the opinions/views of the HSE Sexual Wellbeing programme.

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Notes

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