



SECTION FOUR:

Other Supports

Disabled Person's Parking Card

Disabled Person's Parking Permits or Cards (also known as European Parking Cards or Disabled Parking Badge) are available to people living in Ireland with certain disabilities and those who are registered blind, whether they are drivers or passengers. The parking card can be used by a disabled person in any vehicle in which he or she is travelling. This means that a disabled person who is being driven at different times by different people can bring the parking card with himself or herself and display it in the appropriate vehicle. The parking card is valid for two years from date of issue. Generally, the card is not issued to anyone under five years of age.

The parking card scheme for disabled drivers and passengers applies to public car parking areas only. However, the scheme also enables private car parks, supermarkets, etc. to more effectively monitor parking in areas that they have designated for people with disabilities. If you have a parking card, the disabled parking spaces provided by local authorities are free of charge. Under local bye-laws, each local authority has the discretion to set time limits for parking in these spaces. Some local authorities apply no time limit, while others state that you must abide by the time limits displayed for the area.

Contact your local authority for further information about time limits in your area. Some private car parks may charge for use of a disabled parking space, but this will vary depending on the operator. You can read more about parking facilities for people with disabilities in Ireland [here](#).

The parking card scheme is administered by the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland (DDAI) and the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA).



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- ✓ You will automatically qualify for a parking card if you hold a Primary Medical Certificate (exempting you from payment of VAT, motor tax and Vehicle Registration Tax). However, you must still formally apply for the parking card.

Local Health Offices of the Health Service Executive (HSE) process applications for a Primary Medical Certificate. If the HSE refuses your application for a Primary Medical Certificate, you may appeal the refusal to the Disabled Drivers Medical

Board of Appeal, National Rehabilitation Hospital, Rochestown Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, A96 E2H2.

Parking offences and disabled spaces

It is an offence to park a vehicle in a disabled parking space unless you have a current, valid Disabled Parking Card. If you illegally park in a disabled parking space, you will incur a fixed charge parking fine. Both traffic wardens and members of An Garda Síochána have the power to request and inspect a parking card to ensure it is not being misused.

Rates

A parking card costs €35.

Illegally parking in a disabled parking space will result in an €150 fine, rising to €225 if unpaid within 28 days.



APPLICATION PROCESS:

To request a parking card application form from the **Disabled Drivers Association**, you can email **parkingcard@ddai.ie**.

Alternatively, you can apply online on the website of the **Irish Wheelchair Association** or email **maats@iwa.ie**.

Decision makers within the issuing authorities will determine if you are eligible based on the information provided.

Primary Medical Certificate

To obtain a Primary Medical Certificate, you must first obtain an application form from your Local Health Office. You must complete the application form and return it to the Senior Medical Officer of the Local Health Office. The Senior Medical Officer then appoints a HSE doctor to visit your home and carry out an assessment of the level of your disability. If you satisfy the requirements, you are then granted a Primary Medical Certificate by the HSE.

Replacing a lost parking card

Applications to have lost/misplaced cards replaced should be made directly

to either the Disabled Drivers Association or the Irish Wheelchair Association (whichever organisation issued the card).

Renewing a parking card

The parking card must be renewed every two years. You will be sent a renewal form several weeks before your parking card is due to expire. Therefore, if you change address, you should tell the organisation that issued the card.

If you have had any corrective surgery or treatment that may have altered the level of your mobility, you should report it in the mobility section of the renewal form.

Further information

Information on how to apply for, replace or renew a parking card is available from your local Family Carers Ireland Support Centre or on the websites of the Disabled Drivers Association and the Irish Wheelchair Association.

Disabled Drivers Association

Parking Card Section
Logalisheen North
Ballindine
Mayo
F12 VK03

Tel: (094) 936 4054

Irish Wheelchair Association

National Mobility Centre
Ballinagappa Road
Clane
Kildare
W91 YT99

Tel: +353 (0)45 893094

Mobility Allowance

Mobility Allowance was a means-tested monthly payment payable by the Health Service Executive (HSE) to people who are aged 16 and over and under 66 and who have a disability and are unable to walk or use public transport and who would benefit from a change in surroundings (for example, by financing the occasional taxi journey).

In 2013, the Department of Health announced that the Mobility Allowance scheme and the Motorised Transport Grant was closed to new applicants. The HSE continues to make monthly payments to people who were getting the Mobility Allowance at the time that the scheme closed.

School transport for children with special needs

The Department of Education provides school transport services for children with additional needs. Bus Éireann (the State public transport operator) operates the school transport service on behalf of the department. The school transport service may not be available in all areas. Where the transport cannot be provided, you may be eligible for a Special Transport Grant to help with the cost of making private transport arrangements.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- ✓ The School Transport Scheme applies to children with a special educational needs recognised by the Department of Education. The child must be attending the nearest recognised mainstream school or special class/special school or a unit resourced to meet their special educational needs.

If your application has been refused, you are entitled to appeal the decision. You can appeal to the School Transport Appeals Board using the **School Transport Appeal Form**. Appeals can be made in the following cases:

- If the department is not in a position to provide a transport service due to excessive cost
- Where the maximum level of grant offered does not cover the assessed cost of the journey involved.

Escort provision

Applications can be made to the Department by the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) to employ an escort to accompany a child, if the child's care and safety needs require that support.

Special class arrangements

Transport services for children with additional needs are only provided for the period of enrolment in a special class. If the child returns to mainstream classes, special transport arrangements will not be provided.

Eligible children who are enrolled in an autism class/unit attached to a mainstream school and who subsequently mainstream in that school will retain

their transport eligibility for the duration of their primary education in this school. However, a new application must be made if they transfer to a new school.

Rates

Eligible children are exempt from school transport charges.

A Special Transport Grant towards the cost of private transport arrangements may be provided at the discretion of the Department in certain situations.

Special Transport Grant rates are as follows:

Kilometers (km)	Rate per km
Up to 6437	39.12 cent
Over 6437	21.22 cent



APPLICATION PROCESS:

You should apply to the school principal who will contact the school's **Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO)** in relation to applying for special transport. If the SENO is satisfied that your child is enrolled in the nearest suitable school and that school transport is required, a recommendation will be sent to the School Transport Section of the Department of Education.

Applications for Special Transport Grant may also be forwarded to the School Transport Section through the SENO, prior to the child's enrolment in school. If grant aid is sanctioned, applications for payment of the grant should include a completed **Statement of Attendance form**. Applications may be made at the end of the school year by the parent or guardian of the child to the School Transport Section.

Department of Education

School Transport Section
Portlaoise Road
Tullamore
Offaly
R35 Y2NS

Tel: (057) 9325469 or (057) 9325466

Seniors Alert Scheme

The Seniors Alert Scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by Pobal. Pobal is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that manages programmes on behalf of a number of Government departments and the E.U. The Seniors Alert Scheme encourages community support for vulnerable older people by providing personal monitored alarms.

Purpose:

To enable older persons to live securely in their homes with confidence, independence and peace of mind by providing them with a free personal monitored alarm.

Criteria:

- ✓ Aged 65 years or older
- ✓ Of limited means or resources
- ✓ Living alone or living with another person who meets the eligibility criteria, living alone for significant periods of time during the day, or is a carer to someone else in their household
- ✓ Resides within the geographical area of the relevant registered organisation
- ✓ Able to benefit from the equipment supplied
- ✓ Prepare to maintain contact with the registered organisation

Cost:

It is free. You will get the equipment with one year's monitoring free. The equipment is funded through the Department of Rural and Community Development.

After year one you will be asked to pay a monitoring fee for the alarm, will vary by service provider and the type of alarm or pendant supplied.



APPLICATION PROCESS:

Simply contact your local **Family Carers Ireland Support Centre** operating the scheme and they will apply on your behalf by sending you out an application form.

Fully Funded Energy Upgrade Scheme

The Fully Funded Energy Upgrade Scheme gives grants to homeowners to improve energy efficiency in their homes. Landlords and owners of more than one property can also apply for a grant under the scheme. If you have previously availed of a grant under the scheme, you can reapply to get additional work done. The Fully Funded Energy Upgrade Scheme is administered by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). As of February 2022, the scheme will target the worst performing homes by prioritising those that were built and occupied before 1993 and have a pre-works BER of E, F or G.



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

To qualify for the scheme you must:

- ✓ Be getting one of the following social welfare payments
 - Fuel Allowance as part of the National Fuel Scheme
 - Working Family Payment
 - Jobseeker's Allowance for over six months and have a child aged under seven
 - Disability Allowance for over six months and have a child aged under seven
 - Domiciliary Care Allowance
 - One-Parent Family Payment
 - Carer's Allowance and you must live with the person you care for
- ✓ Own your own home, this must be your main residence.
- ✓ Your home must be built before and occupied before 2006, this means your ESB meter was connected and your home lived in before 2006.
- ✓ Have a published BER. If you do not have a BER for your home, SEAI will carry out one for you with no cost.

You must be getting one of the following social welfare payments:

- ✓ Fuel Allowance as part of the National Fuel Scheme
- ✓ Working Family Payment
- ✓ Jobseeker's Allowance for over six months and have a child aged under seven
- ✓ Disability Allowance for over six months and have a child aged under seven
- ✓ Domiciliary Care Allowance
- ✓ One-Parent Family Payment

See the **Application Guide (pdf)** for technical specifications, as well as information on insurance, contracts, inspections, grant limits and how to apply. Your contractor(s) must carry out the works in accordance with the SEAI. **See detailed information about the Fully Funded Energy Upgrade Scheme here.**

Upgrades offered

You must have grant approval before you buy materials or start any grant-funded work. If you have already started work, you will not be eligible for a grant. Once approved, you have six months to get the works done and claim the grant.

- ✓ Attic insulation
- ✓ Cavity wall insulation
- ✓ External wall insulation
- ✓ Internal wall insulation
- ✓ Secondary work such as lagging jackets, draught proofing and energy efficient lighting
- ✓ New heating systems and windows are occasionally recommended

How the scheme works:

Apply to SEAI and they will check if you qualify for the scheme. Once you are eligible, SEAI will send one of their surveyor's to survey your home and make upgrade recommendations.

SEAI will appoint a contractor from their panel to carry out the upgrade works. Once works are completed, SEAI's energy assessment team will carry out a BER assessment, and there may also be quality inspections.

APPLICATION PROCESS:



You can **apply online** or by post. If applying by post, you should contact the SEAI to get an application form, or download the application form, and send it back to SEAI – see 'How to apply' below. You need the MPRN number from your electricity bill and the name of your SEAI-registered contractor.

Online applications get an immediate response. Postal applications should get a response within five working days.

SEAI publishes a detailed guide to help with your application.

Free Energy Upgrades

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

P.O. Box 119

Caherciveen

Kerry

V23 E781

Tel: 01808 2005

Email: [warmerhomes@seai.ie](mailto:warmehomes@seai.ie)

Legislation

Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act

The Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act was enacted in 2023. It brings in two important provisions for family carers who are also in paid employment, namely

- ✓ The right to request flexible working arrangements for caring purposes
- ✓ The right to five unpaid days of leave for medical care purposes.

For more information see FCI's Briefing Paper on the **Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act**.

Disability Act

The Disability Act 2005 provides for an Assessment of Need to identify your child's health needs and what health services are needed to meet these needs. It is an assessment carried out by the HSE for children or young people with a disability.

Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act

The Act recognises that all adults have the right to play an active role in decisions that affect them. These decisions can be about their personal welfare and/or their property and financial affairs. The Act brings about important changes for people who require support to make decisions and for anyone interacting with them.

It introduces three types of support arrangements for people who currently, or may shortly, face challenges when making certain decisions. It also provides for people who wish to plan ahead for a time in the future when they might lose capacity, by way of an Advance Healthcare Directive or an Enduring Power of Attorney.

The family members and friends who care for a person due to their illness, frailty, disability, mental health difficulty or addiction are therefore the most likely people to bring this legislation to life by assuming the role of a decision supporter.

For more information on understanding the Act, please see **FCI's Practical Guide** [here](#).

EPSEN Act

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN) is designed to provide for the education of people with Special Educational Needs and to provide that their education shall, wherever possible, take place in an inclusive environment.

The EPSEN Act says that children with special educational needs should, where possible, be educated in a mainstream school with children who do not have special needs. This should happen unless it would not be in their best interests or the best interests of the other children in the school.

It should be noted that not all parts of the Act have commenced yet.

For more information on special education, please see FCI's '**A Guide to the Legal Aspects of Caring**'.