



Ms Barbara Gorman,  
Corporate Services  
Sth Dublin County Council  
County Hall, Town Centre,  
Tallaght,  
Dublin 24,

9 February 2012,

Dear Barbara,

Minister Joan Burton has asked me to reply to your correspondence regarding the Humanitarian Assistance Scheme.

Under the supplementary welfare allowance (SWA) scheme, my Department makes exceptional needs payments (ENP) to help meet essential, once-off, exceptional expenditure, which cannot be met out of people's weekly income. In addition to the payment of ENPs, the Department also makes urgent needs payments, which can be made to persons who would not normally be entitled to SWA. The aftermath of flooding is one situation where urgent needs payments can be made.

In the immediate aftermath of the severe flooding experienced in October 2011, the Government put in place a humanitarian aid scheme to assist the people affected by that flooding. The scheme is being administered by staff of the Department of Social Protection (former Community Welfare Officers). Since these recent floods, Department officials have been providing individuals with emergency payments to offset their immediate needs such as the purchase of food, clothing, fuel and household goods. Payments have also been made in respect of essential household items such as carpets, flooring, furniture and white goods.



The purpose of the scheme is to prevent hardship by providing income tested financial support to people whose homes were damaged in the recent flooding. This scheme is not a Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme and accordingly the income test is different. This income test is only in respect of the Humanitarian Assistance scheme and will only apply for the duration of this Scheme.

Larger payments in respect of longer-term needs, such as meeting the cost of repairing homes in certain instances and making them habitable again may be made as the extent of the damage caused becomes apparent.

Any person experiencing hardship as a result of the recent flooding should contact the local Department of Social Protection representative administering the SWA scheme who may be able to offer assistance.

Items not covered under the scheme are as follows: Losses covered by an insurance policy; Loss of inessential or luxury items; Commercial and business losses; Loss or damage to private rented accommodation or local authority accommodation.

The level of payment in each particular case will be a matter for the Department's representative administering the scheme to depending on the severity of the damage experienced relative to the household's ability to meet those costs. Account can also be taken of any payments already paid out.

The objective of the income test will be to determine the household's capacity to meet the costs of restoring their home to a habitable condition. All household income will be considered when determining entitlement to payment.

To date over 800 payments have been made to a value of over €430,000.



Seirbhísí Leasa Shóisialaigh  
An Roinn Gnóthaí Sóisialacha  
agus Teaghlaigh  
Bóthar an Choláiste  
Sligeach



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Full details relating to the scheme criteria are available on the Department's website at

<http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Schemes/SupplementaryWelfareAllowance/Pages/HumanitarianAidScheme.aspx>

Yours sincerely

Mary Furey

SWA Area