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Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
National  
Programme

# COVID-19

## Support & Information for the Arts Sector



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## Statement from Minister Madigan

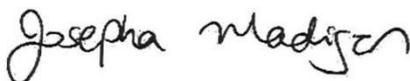
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As Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, I have heard first-hand the accounts of difficulty and hardship that the COVID-19 pandemic has visited on the arts, culture and audiovisual sectors. To say that we live in unprecedented times scarcely does this justice. I would like to acknowledge the high level of compliance of those sectors with the public health guidelines. While the immediate priority has been on the public health crisis, I am very conscious of the difficult challenges facing arts and culture bodies at this time, not least financially.

Government has introduced a range of supports for those affected by COVID-19. Those working in the arts, culture and audiovisual sectors are eligible to apply for these supports and I know large numbers are already benefitting from them. My Department is assisting by giving information about the supports and entitlements available to those affected. Officials from my Department stand ready to advise on any areas of concern you have.

While the road to recovery will be very challenging, the process of re-opening is starting and I assure you that the Government and this Department will support you every step of the way. As a people and as a community we will come through this. Ní neart go cur le chéile.

Yours sincerely,



Josepha Madigan T.D.  
Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

## Helplines

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The Income Support Helpline for queries relating to income support from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is 1890 800 024.

For general issues relating to the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme, employers should contact [Revenue's National Employer Helpline](#) via the myEnquiries system, providing details of the query and a direct dial contact number. Employers should make sure to select 'Employer's PAYE' and then 'Employer's PAYE General Enquiry' when submitting the query through myEnquiries. You can also call Revenue on 01 738 3638.

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has also established a helpline to assist those working in the cultural sector and so for any outstanding queries, please email us directly at [artsunit@chg.gov.ie](mailto:artsunit@chg.gov.ie) with your question, and include a phone number for a callback.

## Available Supports

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### 3.1 Income Supports for Individuals

#### **(i) COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment**

The COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment which is operated by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is a payment of €350 per week. It is available to employees and the [self-employed](#) who have lost their job on (or after) March 13 due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.

If you have been temporarily placed on a shorter working week, you may qualify for [Short Time Work Support](#).

#### **How to qualify**

You can apply for the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment if you:

- are aged between 18 and 66 years old and
- currently living in the Republic of Ireland and
- have lost your job due to the COVID-19 pandemic or
- have been temporarily laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic and
- worked in the Republic of Ireland or were a [cross border frontier worker](#) and
- are not in receipt of any employment income

The payment also applies if you are:

- [self-employed and your trading income has ceased due to COVID-19](#) and has collapsed to the extent that you are available to take up other full-time employment if it was offered to you
- a non EU/EEA worker who has lost employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- a student (or a non-EU/EEA student) who has lost employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- part-time workers who have lost their employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic

If you voluntarily left your employment or self-employment or do not meet the above criteria, you [cannot claim the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment](#). The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection has confirmed that there are no plans in place to

share any data received as part of an immigrant's application for a COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment with GNIB or the Department of Justice and Equality.

### **Rate of payment**

The COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment is paid at a flat rate of €350 per week until at least 8 June. It was originally set at a rate of €203 but it was increased to €350 by Government on 24 March.

Payment is made by electronic transfer (for example, into your bank or credit union account) and only into accounts held in Irish financial institutions. Those applying on or after 8th April can also choose to collect their payment in a post office. They can nominate their local post office when applying online and they will need to bring a form of ID with them when collecting their payment at the post office. Payments will be made into a bank/credit union account or to a nominated post office every Tuesday once an application is processed.

If you were working and were also in receipt of any social welfare payment such as a Carer's Payment, [Working Family Payment \(WFP\)](#) or [One-Parent Family Payment](#), you can, provided you have lost your job due to COVID-19, also claim the COVID-19 emergency payment, in addition to retaining your existing welfare payment. The COVID-19 Payment Unemployment Payment will replace your employment income and will be regarded by the department as equivalent to employment income.

If you have one adult and one or more dependant children you should claim a [Jobseeker's Payment](#) instead of the COVID-19 Pandemic Payment.

This is because you can claim an additional allowance for your adult dependant and child dependants, which will bring your weekly payment to in excess of the €350 weekly payment due under the emergency COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment.

### **Apply**

The quickest and easiest way to apply for the emergency COVID-19 payment is by applying online at [mywelfare.ie](https://mywelfare.ie).

All you need to apply for the service is a [basic MyGovID account](#). All you need is an email address and it only takes 2 minutes to sign up.

Once you've got the basic MyGovID account (or if you already have an existing MyGovID account), just click the button below to apply for this payment.

It is very important to fill in your bank details correctly - include your [BIC and IBAN](#) to avoid delays to your payments.

### **Applications with Incorrect Details Submitted**

A number of applications the Department received did not include correct details and as a result the Department was unable to process payment.

In the majority of cases the reasons for this are:

- incorrect [bank account details](#) entered; or
- non-Irish bank account details supplied (the department does not make payments to Revolut or N26 bank accounts); or
- incorrect identity details (for example, PPSN or date of birth) supplied; or
- the application was submitted from a non-Irish address

Please note, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection will never ask you to confirm bank details over the phone.

### **(ii) Professional Artists on Jobseeker's Allowance**

If you are a self-employed professional artist getting [Jobseeker's Allowance](#), you can apply for this scheme. If you qualify, you do not have to take part in the Department's activation programme for one year.

This allows you to focus on your artistic work for one year.

The rates of payment are the same as for Jobseeker's Allowance.

### **How to qualify**

To qualify for the scheme, you must be aged over 18 and under 66.

You must also:

- be unemployed
- be capable of work
- be available for and genuinely seeking full-time work
- satisfy the means test
- meet the [habitual residence condition](#)
- be a member of one of the listed [certifying professional organisations](#) and provide a certificate or declaration from a professional body as to your status as a professional artist
- be registered as self-employed with Revenue

At least 50% of your income must be derived from your work as a professional artist in the previous year.

Examples include:

- sales of artworks, books or artistic editions
- royalties
- bursaries and grants arising from status as an artist
- book readings
- appearance or lecture fees
- artists' fees on commissioned works, exhibitions, consultancy, selection or artistic advisory panels, education and outreach programmes, design consultants.
- art awards and prizes
- artistic residencies, technical and installation support

When you are being assessed for the scheme, you will be means tested as a self-employed person.

A means test is an assessment of all of your household income, savings, shares, investments or property that you own apart from your own home. Your means test will also include any income that your spouse, civil partner or cohabiting partner has.

The Department adds your income from all sources (including your income from work) and, from this, calculates the means you have each week.

Your means is used to work out what payment you may receive.

Certain expenses related to your profession are allowable.

### **Rates of payment**

The rates of payment are the same as for [Jobseeker's Allowance](#).

## Apply

You can apply to your local Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Branch Office.

You will need to provide:

- a certificate or declaration from a professional body as to your status as a professional artist from one of the listed [certifying professional organisations](#)
- documents from Revenue showing that at least 50% of your income in the previous year came from your work as a professional artist.
- identification – your public service card, passport or driving licence
- proof of your address – a utility bill or letter from a government department
- evidence of your income, including bank statements

You can collect your weekly Jobseeker's Allowance payment from [your nearest Post Office](#). You must bring valid photo ID with you to collect your payment.

Any one of the following is considered to be valid photo ID:

- Public Services Card
- driving licence
- passport
- GNIB card
- National Identity Card (for EU/EEA nationals)

If you are already getting Jobseeker's Allowance and you think you might qualify for the scheme, you can contact your local Intreo Centre or Social Welfare Branch Office.

## 3.2 Supports for Businesses

The government has announced a range of measures for businesses. The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation has published a [detailed list](#) of all supports available to business.

### **(i) Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme**

On 24 March 2020, the Government announced the introduction of the Temporary COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme, which is operated by the Revenue Commissioners. The Scheme has been operational from 26 March, with a transitional phase to allow for the replacement the Employer COVID Refund Scheme that operated from 15 to 25 March.

The Scheme provides a refund to employers in respect of part of the wages of qualifying employees.

The Scheme is available to employers from all sectors (excluding the public service and non-commercial semi-state sector) whose business activities are being adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The scheme is expected to last a period of 12 weeks, starting from 26 March 2020.

Details and detailed guidance on the Temporary COVID-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme may be found at [revenue.ie](http://revenue.ie)

### **(ii) Grants, Loans, Advance Payments and other Business Supports**

There are a number of different business supports available and they range from loans to grants to vouchers to mentoring, including:

- the [SME Credit Guarantee Scheme](#)
- the [SBCI Covid-19 Working Capital Scheme](#)
- the [COVID-19 Future Growth Loan Scheme](#)
- the [Pandemic Stabilisation and Recovery Fund](#)
- the [COVID-19 Business Loan from Microfinance Ireland](#)

### **(iii) Enterprise Supports**

COVID-19 supports such as repayable advances, certain direct grants and other business supports are available to businesses through [Enterprise Ireland](#), [Local Enterprise Offices](#) (LEOs), and [Údarás na Gaeltachta](#).

The new **Restart Grant** will give direct grant aid to micro and small businesses to help them with the costs associated with reopening and reemploying workers following COVID-19 closures.

The Grant will be available to businesses with a turnover of less than €5m and employing 50 people or less, which were closed or impacted by at least a 25% reduction in turnover out to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The grants will be equivalent to the rates bill of the business in 2019, or a minimum grant of €2,000, whichever is the higher, with a maximum grant of €10,000. Businesses who are in arrears or have not yet paid their 2019 rates bill will still be eligible to apply for the grant.

Application forms can be downloaded from all local authority websites from Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

#### **(iv) Deferral and Waiver of Commercial Rates**

In March, the Government agreed with local authorities that they should defer rates payments due from the most immediately affected businesses, primarily in the retail, hospitality, leisure and childcare sectors, until the end of May. On 2 May, the [Government announced](#) that commercial rates are being waived for a three month period beginning on 27 March for businesses that have been forced to close due to public health requirements.

#### **(v) Tax measures: deferrals and warehousing arrangements**

The Revenue Commissioners have issued advice to businesses affected by COVID-19 on [13 March](#), [2 April](#) and [7 May](#) indicating that:

- the charging of interest on late payments is suspended for January/February and March/April VAT and February, March and April PAYE liabilities. These arrangements are further extended to include May/June VAT and May and June PAYE liabilities;
- all debt enforcement activity is suspending;
- and that businesses should continue to file tax returns in time.

On 2 May, the [Government announced](#) that arrangements will be put in place so that COVID-19 related VAT and Payroll tax debts, due from 1 March to the date when sectoral restrictions are lifted, will be warehoused for a period of 12 months, with no interest accruing for the 12 month period.

#### **(vi) Banking Measures**

Following [engagement with the Minister for Finance](#), all retail banks operating in Ireland have announced that they will offer flexibility to their customers, and they may be able to provide payment holidays or emergency working capital facilities.

The main non-bank lenders also confirmed their intention to also support the range of measures announced by the country's main retail banks which is to be welcomed.

On 2 May, it was announced that lenders would extend the 3-month payment breaks offered to businesses and households to 6 months for those requiring assistance which is being provided to bank and non-bank customers impacted by COVID-19.

The Central Bank of Ireland has established an online [Consumer Hub](#) for COVID-19 relating banking queries.

### 3.3 Specific Supports for the Cultural Sector

#### **(i) The Arts Council**

##### **Arts Council COVID-19 Crisis Response Award**

The Arts Council will continue to operate fully throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Their priority is to support artists and arts organisations through this difficult time. Regular updates will be provided both on their website and on their social media channels.

On 3 April, the Arts Council announced a €1 million fund to enable artists to make new and original art during the COVID-19 crisis. The scheme, is designed to support the creation of new artistic work and its dissemination online for the public benefit.

The closing date for the €1m Arts Council COVID-19 Crisis Response Award was 16 April. The Council received over 900 applications, proving the scheme's extreme popularity – it was almost three times over subscribed. The assessment process has now started and it is hoped to make awards over the coming weeks. Please be advised that you are not entitled to the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment if you receive this grant.

##### **Funding Commitments**

At the start of the COVID-19 emergency, the Council introduced a series of measures to help artists and arts organisations manage their businesses during the period of the COVID-19 crisis. These included honouring all existing funding commitments and asking regularly funded arts organisation to prioritise their own payments to artists in turn. Since March 12th it has fast-tracked the payment of up to 90% of funding to organisations and individuals. Financial penalties for organisations/individuals that are unable to deliver key activities/key services arising from the impact of the COVID-19 virus are being waived

##### **Advice**

The Arts Council is providing detailed advice for artists and arts organisations on their websites. Priority is being given towards supporting the artists and arts workers.

The Arts Council is in daily contact with a broad range of artists and organisations to understand how COVID-19 is impacting the sector. The Council continues to operate fully throughout the COVID-19 crisis to support artists and arts organisations through this difficult time. Regular updates are being provided on its website and its social media channels.

##### **Survey**

The Council has also undertaken a detailed survey of arts organisations to identify the impact on audiences, employment and finances for March, April and May as well as a survey of artists seeking information of the economic impact on individuals. Stress tests are also being

developed to identify the impact on arts organisations with funding models heavily reliant on public-facing sources of income such as box office. Results of the survey are available [here](#).

## **(ii) Screen Ireland**

The State development agency for the Irish film, television and animation industry (Screen Ireland) has introduced a number of stimulus measures to support the sector in response to the effects of COVID19. These new measures include practical supports and are designed to aid production companies and creative talent in developing a strong slate of quality projects, so that the industry can emerge from the current situation in a position to scale up production activity.

In response the lack of production activity, Screen Ireland is focusing on the development of projects so that the industry can be ready to flourish when production is in a position to resume.

From an operations perspective, Screen Ireland and Screen Skills Ireland staff continue to work remotely and all funding schemes will continue to be made available. Filmmakers and current productions are offered support on a case-by-case basis due to the numerous complexities and variables involved. The funding application process across all areas from development, production, distribution and publicity will continue as normally as possible.

New Funding Schemes introduced by Screen Ireland include:

- *Strategic Slate Development Fund*: The fund is valued at up to €3 million and aims to support strategic slate project development with strong creative ambition and a focus on diversity and inclusion. This fund aims to support production companies, working closely with screenwriters and directors with strong creative vision to develop their own IP.
- *Enhanced Development Support*: An additional €1 million in enhanced development support across feature film, TV and animation, will be available to Irish production companies working with writers on a project by project basis, where the Strategic Slate Funding Scheme does not apply. 90% of this funding will be made available upfront for successful applicants.
- *Creative Concept Development Scheme for Directors*: A new creative conceptual development fund will be made available directly to Irish directors aimed at investing in the early vision of a director to develop high value, well refined projects for feature film and television. This is expected to generate exceptional screen work with the early creative leadership of a director and refined development before bringing it to a producer or financier.
- *Enhanced Investment in Screenplay & Spotlight Schemes*: An additional €100K total investment will be made available into the Screenplay Development and the Spotlight writing schemes. The Spotlight scheme is aimed at discovering and developing diverse, fresh and exciting new screenwriting talent in Ireland. The scheme is intended as an opportunity for new writers to develop a feature film screenplay, with

guidance and mentorship from leading industry figures at the very beginning of their careers.

- *Financial Planning Support:* Funding will be made available for companies in need of urgent financial planning support resulting from the challenges caused by Covid 19. Funding to enable production companies to develop a financial plan with the advice of a financial consultant will be provided, with companies able to apply for a maximum of €5K.
- *Distribution Support:* Additional marketing and distribution support is being provided to local independent distribution companies for upcoming Irish film and TV releases during this period.

Initial measures to support cash flow and provide flexibility on existing loans were announced in early March. These were:

- Provision of 90% funding upfront on all development loans to Irish screenwriters and production companies through to 31st May 2020.
- Extension to 31st May 2020 of existing development and production loan offers which were due to expire.
- Provision of additional marketing and distribution support for upcoming Irish film and TV releases during this period.
- Continued provision of skills development opportunities for industry practitioners, with Screen Skills Ireland delivering some of its planned activity for 2020 online free-of-charge over the next 6-10 weeks.

In the area of screen skills development, the following measures and supports have been introduced:

- The *Festivals and Events Funding Scheme* has been repurposed as a *Skills Development Events Funding Scheme*, which will assist Irish organisations and film festivals to provide online industry events including masterclasses, workshops, panel discussions, and seminars.
- The *International Bursary Award Scheme* has been repurposed as a *Bursary Award Scheme* to support industry professionals to undertake high level online skills development courses.
- The *Stakeholders & Guilds Funding Scheme* has been announced and supports screen stakeholders and guilds to deliver a range of skills related activity over the course of a year.
- A *Screen Mentoring Funding Scheme* will provide professionals with remote/online mentoring support at key stages in their career development that will encompass business, creative and/or technical mentoring. A mentor panel is currently being assembled, with a call for mentee applications to be launched soon.

### **(iii) Ealaín na Gaeltachta**

Ealaín na Gaeltachta Teo promotes the development of the contemporary and the traditional arts in the Gaeltacht, and is a joint venture between Údarás na Gaeltachta and the Arts Council. Ealaín na Gaeltachta provides services and grant schemes that support the development of arts organisations and individual artists. It also provides training and mentoring support, as well as supporting initiatives that help build the capacity of and infrastructure for the arts in the Gaeltacht.

Ealaín na Gaeltachta continues to support Gaeltacht artists and arts organisations through the COVID-19 crisis. It has adapted its annual funding schemes to help support artists and arts organisations through this difficult time and reflect the different needs within the sector. All the relevant information updates and contact details are provided on its website [www.ealain.ie](http://www.ealain.ie) and on its social media channels.

Existing funding commitments are being met and the various projects are successfully adapting to different work practices and continuing to operate. Gaeltacht artists are encouraged to contact the Áisitheoirí Ealaíona (Arts Facilitators) with any queries.

### **(iv) Online initiatives to support artists and reach audiences**

The Department has been working with key stakeholders on a number of online initiatives to support artists and reach audiences during the COVID-19 crisis, ensuring that the best of our artistic, cultural and creative resources remain available to the public during this time. These online initiatives include:

#### **Culture Ireland – Ireland Performs**

A global audience of more than 630,000 has tuned in to *Ireland Performs*, the new initiative from Culture Ireland and Facebook to promote and support Irish-based artists and performers during the Covid-19 emergency. Since the initiative began on 13th April, a wide variety of Irelands finest artists have each offered a unique audience experience, with many performing in unexpected spaces including a beach, polytunnel, van and shed.

The scheme provides a €100,000 short-term relief fund to pay professional Irish artists for the presentation of their work online. Featured artists are paid €1,000 for their performance. There was a high level of interest by artists and a large volume of applications were received. The scheme is now closed for applications, but Culture Ireland has extended the fund to cover 120 performances. Full details of performances are available at [cultureireland.ie](http://cultureireland.ie).

### **Other Voices – Courage**

The Department is proud to support Courage, a new project from Other Voices that delivers uplifting, inspiring performances from brilliant artists to the public during the Covid-19 crisis. Courage beams these performances directly into homes across the nation from a number of iconic cultural locations, including the National Gallery of Ireland.

More than one million people worldwide have tuned in to Courage since the series began on 23rd April. Featured artists include Lisa Hannigan, Ye Vagabonds, Sorcha Richardson and Mango x Mathman. Courage is live streamed at 8pm every Tuesday and Thursday night on Other Voices YouTube, Facebook Live and RTE.ie. It also airs on RTÉ 2 television at 11.30pm on Thursday nights from 7th May.

### **Dear Ireland – The Abbey Theatre**

From 28 April to 1 May, the Abbey Theatre presented Dear Ireland, a national conversation by Ireland's artists. At the beginning of the crisis, the Abbey Theatre commissioned 50 writers from Ireland, the USA, China and Italy, to each write a monologue to be performed by 50 actors who self-recorded their performances to be streamed on the Abbey Theatre's YouTube channel. The Dear Ireland performances, which have attracted broad critical acclaim, will be available on YouTube for several months. To date, the performances have received more than 134,000 views worldwide.

### **Gov.ie Online Resources**

With so many of people staying at home at this time, the Department is working to highlight many of the online cultural resources available. It has established a page on Gov.ie that brings these resources together so that people can easily see and access what is available to them. Find the list of resources [here](#).

Prepared by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland