**Household Benefits Package (HHB) for retired Public Servants**

There is currently an anomaly insofar as the availability of the Household Benefits Package HHB (without means test) does not extend to retired public servants aged between 66 and 70, who do not receive a Social Welfare pension.

Subject to household composition (see Note), everyone over age 66 receiving a Social Welfare pension (contributory and non-contributory) can access HHB without a means test.  In addition, retired people who spent their working lives in EU, USA, Canada, Australia, NZ, Japan, Austria and Korea and return to Ireland with a pension from any of these countries are also eligible.  Hence, the only distinct group who have to undergo a means test are retired public servants who paid PRSI at classes B,C and D.  This anomaly is reinforced as someone who worked in the Canadian or Australian public service and retires to Ireland can access the HHB package as of right whereas a person in similar circumstances who worked within the Irish public service must undergo a means test.

Furthermore, a retired public servant who is not in receipt of a social welfare payment, does not qualify as an Excepted Person. This means that, in the case of a married couple, if one of them is in receipt of a State Pension (Contributory) and the other is in receipt of a public service pension and is not in receipt of any social welfare payment, the couple cannot qualify for the HHB until one of them reaches the age of 70.

The HHB package consists of Free Electricity to the value of €35 per month and TV licence @ €160.  Taking into account that the total annual cost is €580, the budgetary implication of extending eligibility is trivial in the context of the overall DEASP budget. This is an issue of equity that should be addressed immediately.

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**NOTE – Extract from website of the**

**Dept Employment Affairs and Social Protection**

You qualify for the Household Benefits Package if **you are aged 70 or over.** You do not need to be getting a State pension and the package is not means tested. You also qualify if you are getting [Carer's Allowance](http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/ca.aspx), whether on a full or half-rate payment, but you must be providing full-time care and living with the person you are caring for. Everyone getting the Household Benefits Package must also meet general conditions. (See 'General conditions for the Household Benefits Package' below).

You can also qualify for the Household Benefits Package if you meet **one of the following conditions** *and* **live alone or** **only with excepted people** (see 'Excepted people' below):

1. You are between **66 and 70** and are getting:

* [State Pension (Contributory)](http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social_welfare/social_welfare_payments/older_and_retired_people/state_pension_contributory.html)
* [State Pension (Non-Contributory)](http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/248_State-Pension-Non-Contributory.aspx)
* [Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension](http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Widowers-Pension-Contributory.aspx)
* [Deserted Wife's Benefit](http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Deserted-Wifes-Benefit.aspx) or [Allowance](http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Deserted-Wifes-Allowance.aspx)
* An ordinary Garda Widow's Pension from the Department of Justice and Equality or
* An equivalent Social Security Pension/Benefit from a country covered by EU Regulations or from a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement

2. You are **under 66** and are getting:

* [Disability Allowance](http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/da.aspx)
* Invalidity Pension
* Blind Pension
* Incapacity Supplement or Workmen's Compensation with Disablement Pension (for at least 12 months)
* An equivalent Social Security Pension/Benefit from a country covered by EU Regulations, or from a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement

3. You are caring for a person who is getting Constant Attendance Allowance

4. You are aged between **66 and 70** and **satisfy a means test** (see 'The means test' below).

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**Excepted people are:**

* A qualified adult (your spouse/civil partner/cohabitant is a qualified adult if you are getting an increase for a qualified adult with your payment or you would get an increase but for the fact that they are getting a social welfare payment in their own right)
* Dependent child(ren) under the age of 18 or under the age of 22 if in full-time education (a certificate from the school or college must be supplied for those aged 18 or over)
* A person who is so incapacitated as to require constant care and attention for at least 12 months (medical certification may be required)
* A person(s) who would qualify for the allowance in his/her own right (for example, a person getting an State Pension)
* A person who is providing you or someone in your household with constant care and attention if you or that person is so incapacitated as to require constant care and attention for at least 12 months (medical certification may be required). People in employment for more than 15 hours per week or people getting Jobseeker's Benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance cannot be accepted as providing constant full-time care and attention.

*(Source : http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Household-Benefits.aspx)*