



Citizens **Information** Board
information · advice · advocacy

Information for school leavers



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This leaflet is published by the Citizens Information Board as a brief guide for school leavers. It deals with some of the practical questions about education and employment that young people have at this time.

The Citizens Information Board is the national agency responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social services and for the provision of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service.

You can get information on your rights, entitlements and available services at citizensinformation.ie. You can also get information on all the topics covered in this guide from the network of Citizens Information Centres and from the national Citizens Information Phone Service – Lo-call: 1890 777 121.

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Leaving school

Leaving school can be an exciting time with many opportunities and possibilities ahead of you. Generally, during your last year at secondary school, career guidance teachers will inform and advise you of the options open to you. They will help guide you through these options to choose the one that is best for you.

In this booklet we look at some of the options for further education and training after school. If you get a job after you leave school, you need to know about your employment rights and you can also find out here about, for example, how much you should be paid, what holidays and breaks you are entitled to and what taxes you have to pay.

Personal Public Service Number

On leaving school, and before going to further education, training or starting your first job, you should ensure that you have your Personal Public Service (PPS) Number. It is your unique number for all dealings with employers and with the public service, including social welfare, tax, education and health services.

Most people get notice of their PPS Number by the age of 16. If you do not know your number or you want to apply for one, contact your local social welfare office (listed on welfare.ie).

Managing your money

If you are planning to open a bank account, get a loan or start saving, the website [itsyourmoney.ie](https://www.itsyourmoney.ie) has information on the options available. It also has an online budget planner and loan calculator.

If you are finding it difficult to manage your money and keep up with bills or debts, the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) can advise you on the best way to use your money and can help you deal with any debts you have.

You can find useful guides and information on the MABS website, [mabs.ie](https://www.mabs.ie), or you can call the MABS helpline on Lo-call 1890 283 438 to speak with an adviser.

Accommodation

You can leave home at the age of 18 or at 16 if you have your parents' consent. If you are planning to leave home, make sure to think it through and work out how much you can afford to spend on rent. Don't forget to allow for bills like electricity and heating and to budget for food and other expenses. There may be things you will need to buy for your new home even if it is already furnished. See [mabs.ie](https://www.mabs.ie) for advice on planning a weekly budget.

Threshold provides information about what you should know before you sign a lease and has advice centres that can help if you need advice about your rights as a tenant. See the website [threshold.ie](https://www.threshold.ie) for contact details and opening hours.

Further education and training

As a school-leaver, there are a range of opportunities for you to gain further education, skills and qualifications that can help you get a job.

If you intend to continue to third-level education, you must fill out a Central Applications Office (CAO) form to apply for a place on the course you want to take at the university, college or institution of your choice. Offers of places on courses are decided largely by Leaving Certificate results but some institutions offer outreach programmes that help school leavers from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses are available for school-leavers who want to develop vocational and technological skills. These courses take place in schools and colleges nationwide and a grant is paid to participants.

There are other options for further education and training. These include FÁS training courses, the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) and the Youthreach Programme. The website qualifax.ie has a database of the different courses available.

Financial support

A number of financial assistance schemes are available to help you through further and higher education.

Citizensinformation.ie and **studentfinance.ie** provide information on course fees and details of eligibility requirements for free fees. Tax relief is available on fees paid and can also be claimed by someone who pays the fees on your behalf.

Maintenance grants

You may apply for a maintenance grant if you are planning to take:

- an approved full-time course at third level
- an approved full-time PLC course
- a course leading to a Higher Certificate or Ordinary Bachelor Degree in an Institute of Technology

Family and/or personal income will be assessed when you apply for a maintenance grant but there are also other conditions.

You must be at least 17 years of age on 1 January of the year following your application. If the grant is for a PLC, you must be at least 16 years of age at the start of the course.

The value of the grant is set each year. If you are awarded a maintenance grant you will get payment in instalments throughout the academic year. The grant does not cover the cost of registration or examination fees. There is a new residence requirement for applications. You must have been resident in the State for three of the previous five years. You must also meet nationality requirements.

The rates of the grant are different depending on whether you live near to where you are studying. If you live more than 45 kilometres from your college you are paid a non-adjacent rate. You can qualify for a partial grant if your family income is above the limit for full maintenance. There is a special extra grant for disadvantaged students which tops up the ordinary grant. You may qualify for this if you or your parents are getting certain social welfare payments or taking part in certain programmes (see citizensinformation.ie for information). In 2011 this is €2,980 for students getting the non-adjacent rate (€6,100 in total) and €1,195 for students getting the adjacent rate (€2,445 in total).

Ordinary maintenance grant rates for 2011

Rates (in euro)	Non-adjacent rate	Adjacent rate
Full maintenance	3,120	1,250
Part maintenance (75%)	2,340	940
Part maintenance (50%)	1,560	625
Part maintenance (25%)	780	315

If you think you are eligible for the maintenance grant, you should apply for it when the application process opens, usually in June of each year. You do not have to wait until you get an offer of a place or enrol in college.

Currently there are four maintenance grant schemes administered by local authorities and Vocational Educational Committees (VECS). A single unified scheme of grants will be introduced in May 2011. Visit studentfinance.ie for more information on maintenance grants. You can also find information on other forms of student support (such as scholarships) at studentfinance.ie

Third-level education

You can apply for full-time undergraduate courses through the Central Applications Office (CAO). The CAO has an application pack with a handbook that lists all the courses on offer and gives information on how to apply. Visit cao.ie.

The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) admissions scheme allocates a number of third-level places on a reduced points basis to school leavers from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a college and university admissions scheme that offers places on reduced points to school leavers with disabilities. You apply online through the CAO for both schemes. For more information see accesscollege.ie.

Most undergraduate students attending publicly-funded third-level courses do not have to pay fees. There is an annual student contribution that all students have to pay (except those who qualify for maintenance grants). If you do not qualify for a grant but your family's income is below certain limits you are exempt from 50% of the student contribution. If your family pays student contributions for more than one student in a year, tax relief can be claimed on the second and subsequent contributions. Visit citizensinformation.ie for more information.

Post Leaving Cert (PLC) courses

A Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) course can help you develop skills to get a job or to go into further education and training.

Vocational Education Committees (VECs) provide PLC courses in schools, colleges and community education centres around the country. The courses are full-time and last for one to two years. They offer a mixture of academic study and work experience. A wide range of disciplines is covered.

The website of the Department of Education and Skills (education.ie) includes a list of PLC courses by county and city in the section on further education. You can apply directly to the school or college offering the course.

The qualification you get at the end of your training will depend on the type of course you have chosen. Many of the one-year PLC courses offer Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) accreditation at Level 2, while other more advanced courses may offer FETAC Level 3, which can lead to further studies at third level. Other qualifications such as City and Guilds are also available.

FÁS

FÁS (Foras Áiseanna Saothair) is Ireland's National Training and Employment Authority. It runs a variety of courses for early school leavers.

FÁS can advise you on the training and employment programmes that suit you best. You can contact your local FÁS office, Freephone 1800 611 116, or visit the FÁS website at fas.ie.

The rate of the weekly training allowance you get is linked to your age. In 2011, if you are 15 or 16 years of age the rate is €76.65. If you are aged 17 years, the rate is €95.75. If you are 18 or over, it is €188.00.

However, if you are getting a higher social welfare payment before starting the course, your training allowance will match that higher rate.

Traineeship Programme

You can get training, experience and a qualification by taking part in the FÁS Traineeship Programme. It involves both learning in a training centre and working with an employer. It usually lasts between 20 and 40 weeks but this depends on the course. You can train in a range of different areas – check with FÁS for details.

Statutory Apprenticeship Training

If you are interested in learning both on the job and in the classroom, you can do apprenticeships in trades such as engineering, construction, motor, electrical, furniture and printing.

An apprenticeship generally lasts for four years, about 40 weeks of which will be in off-the-job training. During off-the-job training FÁS, or in some cases the employer, will pay you a weekly training allowance. While you are training on-the-job, your employer will pay you a recommended apprenticeship wage.

Work Placement Programme

If you are unemployed, you can apply to take part in the Work Placement Programme which provides full-time work experience for up to nine months. It is unpaid and voluntary

but if you have been getting a social welfare payment for three months you may be able to continue getting it while on the placement.

To apply, you must be registered with FÁS and let FÁS know that you are interested in taking part in the programme. You can do this at any local FÁS Employment Service Office. If you are already registered with FÁS, you can register your interest in the programme on Freephone 1800 611 116 or (046) 973 8000.

Youthreach

The Youthreach programme provides opportunities for basic education, personal development, vocational training and work experience if you are aged 15 to 20 and have left school without formal qualifications. The course is free and trainees who are over 16 get a weekly allowance equal to the FÁS training allowance.

The programme is generally full-time but a part-time course may be possible. Youthreach courses are held year-round and you can apply to join a course at any time. Courses generally last from one to two years although this can be flexible, depending on your individual needs.

Having completed a Foundation Programme, you may continue to a Progression Programme to progress to the Leaving Certificate Applied course, a higher-level FETAC award or other skills training.

Contact your local Youthreach centre for more information. Centres are listed on the Youthreach website, youthreach.ie.

Back to Education Allowance

The Back to Education Allowance scheme may help you do a full-time course at second or third level if you are getting a social welfare payment. It is intended for participants over the age of 21 but if you are over 18 you may be eligible if you are getting Disability Allowance or Blind Pension (or if you have been out of education for at least two years and are getting a jobseeker's payment or One-Parent Family Payment).

You must have been getting the payment for at least three months to qualify for a second-level course or 9–12 months for a third-level course. If the payment is immediately followed by certain types of courses then that time may also count towards the qualifying period.

The allowance is paid at a weekly rate that is the same as the maximum personal rate of the social welfare payment that qualifies you to take part. It is payable for the duration of the course and it essentially replaces your existing social welfare income. An additional €500 Cost of Education Allowance is paid each year.

You cannot apply for a student maintenance grant if you are getting a Back to Education Allowance.

Part-time Education Option

If you are getting Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit there is a part-time education option. This means that you can keep your existing payment and related benefits while you attend a part-time course that is likely to help you get a job.

To qualify, you must get the permission of your local social welfare office and continue to satisfy the conditions of being available for and genuinely seeking employment. If you are offered work while on the course you will be expected to accept the job offer. You can be any age and may be unemployed for any length of time before starting a part-time course of education; there are no specific eligibility criteria for the Part-time Education Option.

Contact your local social welfare office to apply. You can find the contact details for your local social welfare office on welfare.ie.

Back to Education Initiative

You can avail of part-time courses run by your local VEC under the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI). BTEI courses are available in a wide range of disciplines at different levels (FETAC Levels 1–6). There may be a fee, depending on your circumstances. You may be entitled to get an allowance if you are eligible for Youthreach. Contact your local VEC for more information or see the list of courses at qualifax.ie.

Employment

Income tax

When you start work, or even before, find out from your employer how much you will be paid and your employer's PAYE Registered Number and tax unit number. Contact your regional tax office (see revenue.ie) and explain that you are starting work. You should also give them your PPS Number. You will be asked to complete a Form 12A (Application for a Certificate of Tax Credits and Standard Rate Cut-Off Point).

Once you have sent in Form 12A, it should take at least two to three weeks before you get your Certificate of Tax Credits and Standard Rate Cut-Off Point. At the same time, your employer will get a shorter version which confirms what your total tax credits are and what tax you have to pay.

All workers have tax credits that reduce the amount of tax they have to pay. A single person has a Personal Credit of €1,650 and a separate PAYE Credit, also of €1,650, for the tax year January to December 2011. If you are single your tax is calculated at the standard rate of 20% of your earnings below €32,800 and the higher rate of 41% on the balance. This gives you your gross tax liability. Your tax credits are then subtracted from this figure to give the amount of tax you will pay. The tax you pay is spread over the tax year so that you get approximately the same wages each week.

Other reliefs that can reduce your income tax are available if you pay college fees, medical expenses or rent or mortgage payments. For more information on tax reliefs see revenue.ie or citizensinformation.ie.

Emergency tax

If you don't apply for a Certificate of Tax Credits and Standard Rate Cut-Off Point when you start work, your employer will deduct tax on an emergency basis until it gets the certificate. This means that you will get a temporary tax credit for the first month but after four weeks the tax will start increasing to the highest rate and you will be paying more tax than you need to. If this happens you can apply for a refund of any overpayment – contact your regional Revenue office.

If I start work later in the tax year what will my tax position be?

If you start work during the tax year, your tax credit will be the same amount but it will be spread over a shorter period and you will probably have less tax deducted for that year. If you start work late in the tax year, you may not have to pay any tax that year because your tax credit may be greater than your income.

What is PRSI?

PRSI is Pay Related Social Insurance. You pay regular contributions from your wages to the Social Insurance Fund. These contributions entitle you to social welfare benefits such as payments when you are ill or unemployed and a State pension when you retire.

How much PRSI will I pay?

If you earn less than €352 per week in 2011, you don't pay PRSI but your employer pays a contribution on your behalf and you are covered for all benefits. If you earn over €352 per week, you pay nothing on the first €127 and 4% on the rest. If you earn less than €38 per week, you pay no PRSI and you are covered only for Occupational Injuries Benefits.

How will I know my employer is paying my PRSI?

You should get a pay slip with your wages/salary which indicates the tax, PRSI and union dues that are deducted from your wages. At the end of the tax year you should get a Form P60 which indicates how much you earned, how much tax, universal social charge and PRSI you paid and the number and class of PRSI contributions.

This is an important document which you should keep. If, for example, you have paid too much tax, the information will be required by the tax office when you go to claim tax back. If there is any reason to doubt that your employer has sent the tax and PRSI deducted to the Revenue Commissioners, check with the PRSI Records Section of the Department of Social Protection, Tel: (01) 471 5898 or Lo-call 1890 690 690.

What is the Universal Social Charge?

The Universal Social Charge is a new tax payable on your gross income. It replaces the health contribution and the income levy and came into effect on 1 January 2011. It does not replace the Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) system. You are liable to pay the Universal Social Charge if your gross income is over €4,004 in a year. All Department of Social Protection (social welfare) payments, similar payments (for example, Community Employment schemes and Back to Education Allowance) and income on which DIRT has been paid are exempt.

Universal Social Charge rates

Aged under 70

Income up to €10,036	2%
Income from €10,036.01 to €16,016	4%
Income above €16,016	7%
Self-employed income above €100,000	3%

Aged 70 and over or a medical card holder

Income up to €10,036	2%
Income above €10,036	4%
Self-employed income above €100,000	3%

Your employer is responsible for deducting the Universal Social Charge from your salary and paying it to Revenue on your behalf.

Terms and conditions of employment

What should I know from my employer about the job?

Under the Terms of Employment Act 1994, your employer should inform you in writing of the terms and conditions of the job. This should include:

- Job title or nature of the work
- The date the job is to start
- The rate of pay
- Whether you will be paid weekly or monthly
- Hours of work and overtime
- Holidays
- Sick pay arrangements
- Periods of notice or, if the contract of employment is for a fixed time, the date when the contract expires
- If the contract is temporary, the expected duration of the employment

Your employer must provide these particulars in writing within two months of your employment or within one month if you are under 18 and, in this case, must also give you a copy of the official summary of the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996. If you do not get this information you should request it from your employer.

What is the maximum number of hours I can be asked to work?

Under the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997, the maximum average working week is 48 hours. Generally the average is calculated over four months but for some employees it may be calculated over a period of six months or even 12 months.

In the case of young people under 18, the maximum hours you may be asked to work are fixed by the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996. If you are aged 16 or 17, the hours are limited to eight hours a day or 40 hours a week.

What is the minimum wage I am entitled to?

The National Minimum Wage Act 2000 applies to full-time, part-time, casual and temporary employees. The current national minimum hourly rate of pay is €7.65 an hour for experienced adult workers. Employees under 18 are entitled to €5.36 an hour (70% of the minimum wage). After reaching 18, you must be paid at least €6.12 an hour (80% of the minimum wage) during the first year of employment and €6.89 an hour (90% of the minimum wage) during the second year. You are then entitled to the full minimum wage.

If you are undergoing structured training you may be paid these lower rates for specified periods.

The national minimum wage rate changes from time to time. In April 2011 it was announced that it is proposed to restore the rate to €8.65 an hour. The current rate and further information is available from NERA (Lo-call: 1890 80 80 90, employmentrights.ie).

What breaks am I entitled to?

The general rule is that you are entitled to a break of 15 minutes after a 4.5 hour work period. After a six-hour work period you are entitled to a break of 30 minutes, which can include the first 15-minute break. There is no entitlement to be paid during these breaks and they are not considered part of working time. Employees in specific types of work or areas may have additional entitlements – see citizensinformation.ie.

How soon can I take annual leave?

Your employer can determine when you can take annual leave and should consult you or your union one month beforehand. However, you should talk to your employer about when you would like to take leave. The leave must be taken during the

current leave year or within six months after it ends. You cannot be paid instead of annual leave unless you are leaving work.

How is my annual leave entitlement calculated?

Under the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 there are minimum holiday entitlements. These may be calculated in one of three ways depending on total hours worked:

- Four weeks (20 working days) if you work at least 1,365 hours in the leave year, or
- One-third of a working week for each month that you work at least 117 hours, or
- 8% of the hours worked in the leave year (up to a maximum of four working weeks)

You can use whichever method gives you the best entitlement.

The leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March but an employer can use a different leave year, for example, January to December, provided this is used consistently. Once you have worked for eight months, you are entitled to an unbroken period of two weeks of holidays.

Pensions

Your contract of employment may include an entitlement or requirement to join a pension scheme. If there is no pension scheme, your employer must provide you with access to at least one standard Personal Retirement Savings Account (PRSA), a flexible account designed to help you save for your pension. This also applies if there is a pension scheme but you are not eligible to join it within six months of starting work. For further information contact the Pensions Board, Lo-call: 1890 656 565, web: pensionsboard.ie.

Joining a trade union

Trade Union membership is voluntary and you have a legal right to join a union if you wish to. Unions negotiate with the employer on the terms and conditions of employment for all its members and can provide advice and support to individual members who may need it.

Losing your job

Can I be let go from my job?

If you have been working for less than a year, your employer can let you go but only after you get notice of at least one week of the employer's intention to do so. No notice is required for employment of less than 13 weeks.

Once you have worked for a year you are covered by the Unfair Dismissals Act. This provides protection so that you cannot be dismissed without good reason.

Even if you have been working for less than a year, you are protected against unfair dismissal due to:

- Trade union membership/activity
- Pregnancy, recently having given birth, breastfeeding or other matters connected with pregnancy or birth
- Availing of rights granted by the Maternity Protection Acts 1994–2004, the Adoptive Leave Act 1995, the Parental Leave Act 1998, the National Minimum Wage Act 2000, or the Carer's Leave Act 2001

See losingyourjob.ie for more information on your rights and entitlements if you lose your job. The Citizens Information Board publishes a booklet called *Employment Rights Explained* which gives detailed information on all your employment rights.

Leaving your job

An employer is entitled to a minimum of one week's notice from an employee if the employee has worked for 13 weeks. Your contract of employment may require you to give more notice.

If you give up a job without good reason you may be disqualified from getting Jobseeker's Benefit for nine weeks.

Illness

What should I do if I am sick and cannot go to work?

You must notify your employer if you get sick and cannot go to work. You are usually expected to produce a medical certificate after two days absence and you should send this to your employer. Your employer does not have to pay you while you are on sick leave but there may be arrangements regarding illness and sick pay specific to your employment. You should check this with your employer or union.

If your terms and conditions of employment do not include sick pay you should apply for Illness Benefit (which is based on your PRSI contribution). Ask your doctor for a Social Welfare Medical Certificate and send it to Department of Social Protection, PO Box 1650, Dublin 1. As a first-time entrant to the PRSI system you are entitled to Illness Benefit once you have two years of paid contributions on your record. If you are entitled to Illness Benefit you do not get any payment for the first three days of illness.

The amount of Illness Benefit you get depends on your earnings in what is known as the relevant tax year. This means that a claim made anytime in 2011 is based on your earnings

in 2009. If you had no earnings that year, you get the minimum rate. A claim made in 2012 will be based on your earnings in 2010.

If you are not entitled to Illness Benefit you should still send in medical certificates to the Department of Social Protection because you may be entitled to PRSI credits. Credits are PRSI contributions which you do not have to pay for and which keep your social insurance record up to date so that you can be entitled to social welfare benefits.

If you have no money and are over 18, contact the Community Welfare Officer at your nearest health centre to claim Supplementary Welfare Allowance (see page 25). For details of your local health centre see hse.ie or call the HSE Information Line on Callsave 1850 24 1850.

What happens if I am out of work because of an injury at work?

If you are injured at work, notify your employer/supervisor and, regardless of the seriousness of the injury, complete a Declaration of Accident at Work Form (Form DB/OB 1) which is available from the Department of Social Protection. There are special social welfare provisions, called Occupational Injuries Benefits (OIB), for workers who are injured at work.

For further details see citizensinformation.ie or contact the Occupational Injuries Benefit Section, Department of Social Protection, Store Street, Dublin 1, Tel: (01) 704 3018.

You do not need to have a certain number of PRSI contributions to get Occupational Injuries Benefit. When you go to the doctor or hospital, ask them to fill in the section of the form (Social Welfare Medical Certificate) for Injury Benefit.

Medical card

If you are getting Jobseeker's Allowance or your income is below a certain amount, then you may be eligible for a medical card which entitles you to get medical care free of charge.

In 2011, if you are living alone and your income (less tax and PRSI) is below €184.00 per week, or you are working and living at home and it is below €164.00 per week, you are eligible. If you are paying rent or you have travelling-to-work expenses, these income limits may be increased.

If you are not eligible for a medical card, you may be entitled to a GP visit card which doesn't provide the same range of services as a medical card but does allow you to visit your GP for free.

You can get an application form from your local health centre or local health office. You can call the Health Service Executive Information Line on Callsave 1850 24 1850, web: hse.ie.

Hospital charges

If you don't have a medical card and you have to go into hospital in a public ward as a public patient, you are charged €75 a day (2011). There is a maximum charge of €750 (€75 x 10 days) in a period of 12 consecutive months. There are additional charges if you choose private or semi-private care.

There is no charge for out-patient services but you must have a letter from your doctor. There is a charge of €100 if you attend the Accident and Emergency Department of a public hospital without a referral from your doctor.

Social welfare

There are two types of jobseeker's social welfare payment for people who are unemployed: Jobseeker's Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance. To get Jobseeker's Benefit you must have paid PRSI contributions for at least two years. This is not required for Jobseeker's Allowance – entitlement depends on your income.

If you have just left school, you cannot get Jobseeker's Allowance until three months after you have finished school and exams. If your parents are getting a social welfare payment they can continue to get the child dependant increase for you for these three months. You do not have to wait to register with FÁS and you should do this as soon as you can.

If you are in financial difficulty you can apply for a basic weekly allowance called Supplementary Welfare Allowance. Contact the Community Welfare Officer at your nearest health centre to apply. See hse.ie or phone Callsave 1850 24 1850 for details of your local health centre.

For both Jobseeker's Allowance and Supplementary Welfare Allowance you must be over 18 and your income must be below a certain level. If you are living with a parent or a step-parent in the family home, some of your parent's income will be taken into account when assessing your income.

The maximum amount of Jobseeker's Allowance you can get depends on your age. If you are under 22 it is €100 per week, if you are 22–24 years of age it is €144, and if you are over 25 the maximum rate is €188 (2011 rates). The lower rates do not apply if you have a dependent child or if you have transferred to Jobseeker's Allowance from Disability Allowance or are taking part in an approved course of education, training or Community Employment. You may be entitled to other benefits with Jobseeker's Allowance.

You apply for Jobseeker's Allowance at your local social welfare office. This is also known as signing on. When you apply you will need to bring some documents with you:

- Your Personal Public Service Number.
- Details of your availability for work and any efforts you have made to get work. For example, letters you have written to employers and any responses you have received.
- Details of your income, or your parents' income if you are living at home.
- Passport, driver's licence or other proof of your identity.
- Proof of address such as a bill, bank statement or letter from a local authority or government department.

If you don't have all of the necessary documents you should still apply and then send in your documents as soon as possible. If you have difficulties getting some of the documents please tell the staff in your local social welfare office. They may be able to help. You can find the contact details for your local social welfare office on welfare.ie. The Citizens Information Board publishes a leaflet called *Have You Lost Your Job?* which gives more information about applying for Jobseeker's Allowance.

At what age can I...?

Leave school

Age 16 or on completion of three years post-primary education, whichever is the later

Leave home

Age 16 – with parental consent

Age 18 – without parental consent

Enter employment

Age 14 – up to seven hours per day (35 hours per week) during school holidays only

Age 15 – up to eight hours per week during term-time and up to seven hours per day (35 hours per week) during school holidays

Age 16 – up to eight hours per day and 40 hours a week

Drive on the public road

Age 16 – motorbike up to 11kw/125 cc, moped up to 50 cc, work vehicle such as a tractor or JCB, maximum speed of 45 kph

Age 17 – vehicle with seats for up to eight passengers and maximum weight of 3,500 kg

Age 18 – motorbike up to 25kw (or any size if two years on a full licence), goods vehicles exceeding 3,500 kg

Age 21 – buses and minibuses

Buy alcohol

Age 18 – if under 18 you must be accompanied by a parent on a licensed premises and may only remain up to 9pm (10pm from May to September). If aged 15 to 17 you can stay later when attending a private function at which a substantial meal is being served.

Drink alcohol

Age 18 – if you are under 18 you can drink alcohol in a private residence if you have parental consent

Buy cigarettes

Age 18

Be charged with a criminal offence

Age 10 – for murder, manslaughter, rape and aggravated sexual assault

Age 12 – for other criminal offences

Consent to medical treatment

Age 16

Give blood

Age 18

Consent to sexual intercourse

Age 17 unless married

Marry

Age 18 unless an exemption is granted by either the Circuit Court or the High Court

Apply for a 10-year passport

Age 18 – if you are younger you can only apply for a five-year passport

Book a holiday

Age 18

Apply for a National Age Card

Age 18

Register to vote

Age 18 for all elections and referenda

Stand for elections

Age 18 – local elections

Age 21 – national and European elections

Age 35 – presidential election

Sit on a jury in court

Age 18

Enter a legally-binding contract

Age 18 – except for certain contracts such as for necessities (for example, food) or apprenticeships or if you are or were married

Make a will

Age 18 unless you are or were married

Further information

Citizens Information
citizensinformation.ie

Citizens Information Phone Service
Lo-call: 1890 777 121, Monday to Friday 9.00 am – 9.00 pm

Citizens Information Centres
Visit **centres.citizensinformation.ie** to find your nearest centre.

Department of Social Protection
Information Section, Lo-call: 1890 66 22 44, **welfare.ie**

FÁS
Lo-call: 1800 611 116. The FÁS website, **fas.ie**, has details of Local Employment Services and Job Clubs around Ireland.

The National Employment Rights Authority
Lo-call: 1890 80 80 90, **employmentrights.ie**

Spunout
spunout.ie

Threshold
Tel: (01) 678 6096, **threshold.ie**.
Accommodation advice centres in Dublin, Cork and Galway.

Youth Information Centres
Find your nearest centre on **youthinformation.ie**

The Citizens Information Board provides independent information, advice and advocacy on public and social services through citizensinformation.ie, the Citizens Information Phone Service and the network of Citizens Information Services. It is responsible for the Money Advice and Budgeting Service and provides the National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities.

Head Office

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Dublin 2	w	citizensinformationboard.ie

Citizens Information 

LOG ON

www.citizensinformation.ie

LO-CALL

1890 777 121

Mon to Fri, 9am-9pm

DROP IN

260 locations nationwide