

14 October 2025

Minister Dara Calleary TD
Department of Social Protection
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada
Store Street
Dublin 1

Cc Mr Micheál Martin, Taoiseach
Mr Simon Harris, Tánaiste

Dear Minister

I write to express the anger of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions at the exclusion of Jobseeker's Pay-Related Benefit from the general rate increase of €10 per week for core weekly payments in Budget 2026.

First, the weekly payment caps that apply to the level of Jobseeker's Pay-Related Benefit an insured worker can receive (€450; €375; €300) remain unchanged since the draft design of the scheme was published by the Department in December 2022. In the three years since, the personal rate of all other core weekly payments and pensions increased by €36 per week, rising to €46 from January 2026.

Second, the freeze on Jobseeker's Pay-Related Benefit undermines the *raison d'être* of the payment. In the words of your immediate predecessor on signing the commencement order: "Pay-Related Benefit is all about providing workers with a greater safety net and cushioning them from a sudden 'cliff-edge' drop in income." Holding the weekly payment caps at their 2022 level; not adjusting to take account of inflation or wage growth, will mean the Budget failed to address sharp cliff-edges.

Third, workers are paying a higher PRSI contribution to provide for Jobseeker's Pay-Related Benefit, as per the PRSI Roadmap approved by Government in November 2023. The current 0.2 percentage points increase will amount to an extra €104 contribution from the average worker to the Social Insurance Fund over the next twelve-month period, 1 October 2025-2026. From 2028, workers and their employers, on their behalf, will be contributing an additional €1.6 billion annually. All the while, Government is letting Jobseeker's Pay-Related Benefit wither on the vine. This is completely unacceptable to Congress and our affiliated unions.

Finally, the anger of the trade union movement at this stealth cut to Jobseeker's Pay-Related Benefit is compounded by a Budget which does next to nothing to protect the living standards of workers and working families on or above average earnings. It is never too late to do the right thing. The Social Welfare Bill gives an opportunity for Government to rectify this matter.

I look forward to your early response.

Yours sincerely



Owen Reidy
General Secretary