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**For Written Answer on :** **15/10/2019**
**Question Number(s)**: **611** **Question Reference(s): 42053/19**
**Department:** **Employment Affairs and Social Protection**
**Asked by: John Brady T.D.**
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**QUESTION**

To ask the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the number of jobseeker's aged 18 to 24 years of age that will see their payment rate increased to the full rate; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

**REPLY**

The age related reduced rates for Jobseeker Allowance (JA) recipients aged 18 to 25 were introduced on a phased basis from 2009 to protect them from welfare dependency by providing them with a strong financial incentive to participate in education or training to improve their chances of obtaining sustainable full time employment.

As part of the review of reduced rates being carried out in my Department, it was identified that there is a small cohort of young people who face significant financial barriers who are living independently and in receipt of State support towards their housing costs. On Budget Day I announced that the rate of JA and Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) will increase to the full rate for those jobseekers aged 18 to 24 years who are on age-related reduced rates and in receipt of State housing supports including Rent Supplement and the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).   This measure is effective from 6th January 2020 and will provide significant financial support towards their housing costs as the weekly JA and SWA rates for eligible jobseekers will increase by €90.30 and €88.30 respectively.  The estimated number of people who will benefit from this measure is 300 young people.

Another measure which I introduced in Budget 2020 is the abolition of the age-related rate of payment for 25 year olds. This provides for the payment of up to the maximum weekly personal rates of €203 per week for JA recipients and €201 for SWA recipients from the current rate of €157.80. This change is also effective from 6th January 2020 and will benefit almost 1,800 young people

The Deputy will be aware that where a young jobseeker participates in education or training they will receive the maximum personal rate of €203 per week, less any means-related deductions.  Also, jobseekers who participate in the Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS), a work experience scheme for young jobseekers who face barriers to employment, receive a maximum weekly payment of €229.20.  Age-related reduced rates do not apply to jobseekers with a dependent child, who have transferred to JA from disability allowance (DA), or who were in State care during the 12 months before age 18.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

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**For Oral Answer on :** **23/10/2019**
**Question Number(s)**: **58** **Question Reference(s): 43520/19**
**Department:** **Employment Affairs and Social Protection**
**Asked by: John Brady T.D.**
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**QUESTION**

To ask the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the number of young jobseekers aged 18 to 24 years of age that will not see their weekly rate increase to the full rate as announced in Budget 2020; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

**REPLY**

On Budget Day, I announced measures to support young jobseekers including the abolition of the age-related rate of payment for 25 year olds, from January 2020. I also announced that the increased rate would be available to jobseekers aged 18 to 24 who are living independently and in receipt of State housing supports including rent supplement and the Housing Assistance Payment.

From next January, a young jobseeker aged 25 years will receive a weekly increase of €45.20 from €157.80 up to €203 and a younger jobseeker will benefit by up to €90.30 per week. These are significant weekly increases.

There are currently over 19,000 jobseekers aged 18-25 of which 16,100 are in receipt of a reduced age-related payment.  The measures that I have announced will benefit approximately 2,080 of those on the reduced rates at a cost of €5.2 million for 2020, leaving a balance of approximately 14,000 on age related rates.

In 2009, youth unemployment had reached its highest rate with almost 28% of young people under the age of 25 unemployed. The CSO seasonally-adjusted youth unemployment rate for September 2019 has almost halved in the last 10 years to 14.8%.

Age-related rates for young jobseekers protect them from long-term welfare dependency, by providing them with a strong financial incentive to participate in education or training to improve their chances of obtaining full time employment. A young jobseeker who participates in education or training receives the maximum personal rate of €203. Jobseekers who participate in the Youth Employment Support Scheme, receive €229.20. I will continue to focus on youth unemployment and in developing initiatives to help young people back into work.

The Deputy will be aware that my Department is finalising a review on the impacts of the reduced rates on young jobseekers and I expect that this will be completed shortly.

**ENDS**