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Library & Research Service

Bill Digest

Social Welfare, Civil Registration and Charities (Amendment) Bill 2026

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Abstract

The Social Welfare, Civil Registration and Charities Bill 2009 is an omnibus Bill that provides for amendments to three distinct Acts: the *Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005*, *Civil Registration Act 2004* and *Charities Act 2009*. Many of the provisions in Bill are largely technical in nature. The Bill does however provide for changes to the Public Services Card, the operation of the Social Welfare Appeals and Charity Appeals Tribunals respectively. In addition, the Bill provides for operational amendments to the Civil Registration system.

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Executive Summary

The *Social Welfare, Civil Registration and Charities Bill 2026* was published on10 September 2026 and is due for Second Stage debate on 22 September 2026. The Bill is an omnibus Bill in that it proposes amendments to three distinct Acts, namely, *Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005* (the Principal Act), *Civil Registration Act 2004* and the *Charities Act 2009*.

In summary, the Bill seeks to provide for the following:

- allow for the voluntary inscription of date of birth of holders on the Public Services Card (PSC), and on a voluntary, personal discretion basis, provide for the presentation of the PSC as a form of identification;
- provides for references in the *Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005* to the bereaved partner's (non-contributory) pension;
- repeal reference in the social welfare acts to pre-retirement allowance, which has been closed to new applicants since 2007;
- changes to disqualification from Jobseeker's Benefit in light of the introduction of Jobseeker's Pay Related Benefit in 2025;
- in respect of the social welfare appeals process, clarifications that Social Welfare Appeals personnel may seek the opinion of a medical assessor, and provision for Chief Appeals Officer to send decisions for consideration back to Appeals Officers;
- in respect of *Civil Registration Act 2004*, amendments provided include provisions to enable State agencies (for example, Tusla) to register or re-register the birth of a child with the father's details on foot of a court order to enable a medical practitioner to authorise a person to notify the particulars of a death; and to address the concerns of persons affected by previous incorrect or illegal birth registration; and
- under the *Charities Act 2009*, the Bill proposes decrease to the quorum to three including the Deputy Chair of the Charity Appeals Tribunal. Separately, the Bill provides for the nomination of Deputy Chairperson to the Tribunal, and also provides that witnesses before the Tribunal will have an immunity from disclosing information or providing evidence about a certain subject.

The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Social Protection, Rural and Community Development undertook PLS of the General Scheme of the Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill. PLS on the General Scheme of the Bill took place on the 29 April,[1] 12 May and 27 May 2026. The Joint Committee on Social Protection Rural and Community Development published their report on the PLS in July 2026.

[1] This debate starts at page 19 of the pdf transcript.

Additional Library and Research Service (L&RS) Resources

1. Policy and Legislative Briefing Paper (June 2026) examining some of the policy proposals outlined in the General Scheme of the Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill. The paper focuses on the origins and purpose of two policy and legislative changes provided for in the General Scheme that may be of most interest to Members. These are changes to (1) the Public Services Card and (2) the code of practice for determining employment status. In so doing, it also explores the relevant legislative proposals contained in the General Scheme.
2. Bill Resource Page providing resources related to this Bill, including select media, publications from Government, the Oireachtas, stakeholders, and specialist commentary.

[Note: Some resources may only be accessible on the Oireachtas network.]

Contents

Executive Summary 2
Additional Library and Research Service (L&RS) Resources 3
Glossary and abbreviations 8
Introduction 9
Purpose of proposed legislation 10
Background 11
Amendments to the Social Welfare Acts 11
Proposed changes 12
Public Service Card 12
Social Welfare Appeals Tribunal 25
Technical amendments 27
Amendments to the Civil Registration Act 2004 28
The Civil Registration Act 2004 28
Proposed changes 29
Register of lived identity 29
Technical amendments 30
Amendments to the Charities Act 2005 31
Charities Act 2009 31
Proposed changes 32
Operation of the Charity Appeals Tribunal 32
Procedural amendments 33
Pre-legislative scrutiny 34
Overview of pre-legislative scrutiny (PLS) 34
PLS Report 34
Table summary of PLS recommendations 35
Legislative proposal 45
Principal provisions of the Bill 45
Part 1: Preliminary and General 45
Part 2: Amendments of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 45

Part 3: Amendments of the Civil Registration Act 2004 47
Part 4: Amendments of the Charities Act 2009 49
Appendix 50
List of Public Bodies under Schedule 5 of the SWCA 52

Table of Tables

Table 1: Glossary and abbreviations 8

Table 2: Number of PSCs issued per year 2011-2022 16

Table 3: Age and Gender breakdown of PSCs issued per year 2011-2022 17

Table 4: Sharing of information from MyGovID with Partners 18

Table 5: Time line and commentary on events associated with the PSC 20

Table 6: Summary of main areas of public debate around the PSC 24

Table 7: Number of Certificates issued by Life Event Type 29

Table 8: Themes of Joint Committee's PLS recommendations on the General Scheme of the Bill 34

Table 9: Key to traffic light dashboard comparing the Bill as published with Committee PLS recommendations 36

Table 10: Traffic light dashboard comparing the Bill as published with Committee PLS recommendations. 36

Table 11: Beneficiaries and expenditure across the main social welfare schemes 2024 50

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Overview of SAFE Registration standards 15

Figure 2: PSC - Assessment of project plan against good practice business case 52

Glossary and abbreviations

Table 1: Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
PSC	Public Services Card
SWCA	Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005
GS	General Scheme
DSP	Department of Social Protection
PLS	Pre-Legislative Scrutiny

Introduction

The Social Welfare, Civil Registration and Charities (Amendment) Bill 2026 was published on 9 September 2026 by the Department of Social Protection.[2] It is scheduled for Second Stage debate on 22 September 2026 in Dáil Éireann.

Firstly, this Digest introduces the policy and legislative context for the Bill. The Digest examines the extent to which issues raised in the Joint Committee on Health's Report on Pre-Legislative Scrutiny were taken on board in the final drafting of the Bill as published. Finally, the Digest summarises some of the key provisions of the Bill.

The Social Welfare, Civil Registration and Charities (Amendment) Bill 2026 ("the Bill") seeks to amend and extend the *Social Welfare Acts*, the *Civil Registration Act 2004* and the *Charities Act 2009* respectively and to provide for related matters. As such, the Bill is omnibus in nature. In other words, the Bill has inputs across distinct policy area , which come from the following Departments: Department of Social Protection (Social Welfare and Civil Registration Acts), Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (Charities Act) and from Children, Disability and Equality (Civil Registration Act).[3]

The Bill is comprised of 4 Parts accounting collectively for 26 sections.

There was no formal press release from the Department of Social Protection or other Departments on foot of publication of the Bill. However, in the opening statement at the Pre-legislative Scrutiny hearings on the General Scheme, an official from the Department of Social Protection made the following comments on the aim and purpose of the Bill:

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[2] See Department of Social Protection (2026) *General Scheme of the Social Welfare and other Matters Bill 2026*

[3] For example, see inputs from these Departments during the hearings comprising the PLS process on the General Scheme of the Bill.

"The General Scheme provides for miscellaneous amendments to the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 and the Civil Registration Act 2004. It also makes amendments to the Charities Act 2009.

....The amendments to the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 address a range of issues that will allow for more effective operation of the Department's schemes and services. This includes a number of amendments to the legislation that underpins the Public Services Card.

The General Scheme contains a range of amendments to the Civil Registration Act 2004 to improve the functioning of the General Register Office.

On request from the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, the General Scheme also contains some amendments to the Charities Act 2009. The amendments in question are wholly technical and operational in nature but are essential in supporting the ongoing efficient operation of the Tribunal, and ensuring the Tribunal can deliver on its statutory requirements." [4]

Purpose of proposed legislation

Pre-legislative Scrutiny (PLS) on the General Scheme of the Bill took place on the 29 April,[5] 12 May and 27 May 2026. The Joint Committee on Social Protection Rural and Community Development published their report on the PLS in July 2026.

It should be noted that in June 2026, the Library & Research Service (L&RS) published a Policy and Legislative Briefing Paper on the General Scheme of the Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill. It is recommended to read the Policy and Legislative Briefing Paper in conjunction with this Bill Digest where the reader is seeking more substantive policy and legislative context in respect of some of the issues. It should be noted that there a number of changes between the content of General Scheme of the Bill, published in April 2026, and the current Bill.[6]

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[4] 2026-04-29_opening-statement-niall-egan-assistant-secretary-general-department-of-social-protection_en.pdf

[5] This debate starts at page 19 of the pdf transcript.

[6] For more detail on this, see the specific details set out in the Pre-legislative Scrutiny (PLS) section below.

Background

This sections examines the specific policy context surrounding each of the Bill's proposed amendments to three Acts (*Social Welfare Acts*, the *Civil Registration Act 2004* and the *Charities Act 2009* respectively) seeks to respond to. It should be noted that, for the most part, the changes proposed in the Bill are technical in nature. Therefore, the following sections seek to provide some insight into the workings of three Acts and in particular those parts that are most relevant to the proposed changes.

Amendments to the Social Welfare Acts

Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005

The *Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005* (SWCA) is the core source of social welfare legislation. It gives legal effect to the social welfare system in Ireland. It outlines definitions, eligibility criteria, benefit and payment rates and operational matters for between 80 and 100[7] social welfare schemes across social insurance (Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI)) and social assistance (means tested) payments. Ireland's social protection system is therefore a mixed system comprising payments where entitlement derives from and is funded through social insurance contributions (PRSI) and, separately, means-tested payments (social assistance) financed by general taxation. For 2026, approximately €14.8 billion - over 50% of expenditure - is estimated to be funded through PRSI, with the balance funded by the Exchequer.[8]

In the present context, the SWCA also provides the legal basis for Personal Public Services Numbers (PPN) and the Public Services Card (PSC).[9] Additionally, the SWCA also seeks to provide for eligible citizens during periods of unemployment and underemployment, this rests on definitions of what it is to be an employee, self-employed and the contrast to being unemployed, etc. In the SWCA, this refers also to social insurance contributions from employer and employee (insurable employment), employment with more than one employer, employment outside of the State, full, part-time and casual employment etc. In this regard, Schedule 1, Parts 1 to 3, of the SWCA provides for interpretation of "employments, excepted employments and excepted self-employed contributions".[10]

The SWCA runs close to 200 sections, is just under 600 pages in length and has been the subject of, at a minimum, one annual amendment, most notably in respect of Budget day announcements of changes in social welfare schemes, rates and related criteria. The SWCA is

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[7] See for example DPS on Gov.ie: Social Welfare Schemes and Services

[8] Committee on Public Accounts debate - Chapter 17, Classification of workers for PRSI purposes - Thursday, 5 Mar 2026

[9] Department of Social Protection, Gov.ie, Social Welfare Schemes and Services

[10] *Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005*, as amended.

also the basis for numerous Statutory Instruments and Operational Guidelines[11], which collectively provide for the detailed operation of various social welfare schemes and services.

Table 11 in the appendix shows a tailored summary of numbers of beneficiaries of, and the expenditure on, the main social welfare schemes in 2024. The Table seeks to show the scale of the number of beneficiaries of social welfare schemes in any one year and the level of public expenditure devoted to the respective schemes.[12] It is also worth noting that the social welfare schemes set out in Table 11 (in the appendix) show the social protection system provides for a broad range of life circumstances beyond those that are solely employment related, namely: 45.7% of expenditure is related to pensions and related payments with 757,425 beneficiaries; and 10.46% of payments are for child benefit, accounting for 676,916 beneficiaries.

Proposed changes

Most of the amendments proposed for the SWCA are technical in nature. Thus the following sections focuses on some clear policy issues treated by the Bill and then briefly discussed the technical changes proposed by the Bill.

Public Service Card

This section draws in summary form on the L&RS Policy and Legislative Briefing paper on the General Scheme of the Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill, published in June 2026. Readers should consult that paper for more detail.

In the PLS hearing of 29 April, officials from the Department of Social Protection stated the purposes of Head 7 (Amendments to section 263 (PSC) of the SWCA) of the General Scheme are the following:

[11] Department of Social Protection, Gov.ie, Operational Guidelines

[12] It should be noted that some of the beneficiaries may be in receipt of more than one payment depending on their particular age and circumstances.

> *"The amendments to the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 address a range of issues that will allow for more effective operation of the Department's schemes and services. This includes a number of amendments to the legislation that underpins the public services card, PSC. These proposals would enable the cardholder, at their own discretion, to present the PSC as a form of identity to a body that is not a specified body under the Act. The amendments would also allow the date of birth of a cardholder to be inscribed on the public services card where the person requests it, in order to use the card as a means of verifying age. These amendments would be of particular benefit to people who may not have a driver's licence or a passport, both of which have a cost to obtain."*[13]

In response to a question to provide further rationale as to the impetus for this amendment to the SWCA - providing for changes to the PSC, at the first PLS hearing on the part of the Joint Committee on 29 April 2026, the relevant Assistant Secretary of the DSP gave the following response:

> *"It has come up repeatedly from the people who use the public services card. The main issue that we found over many years now is the fact that where people have to prove their identity to other bodies that are not prescribed bodies in the legislation under the Social Welfare Consolidation Act, they usually have to get a driver's licence or passport and, as I said in the opening statement, it costs money to obtain those documents. For many people who do not require a driving licence or might not have access to a passport, the cost is a difficult issue. It is from that cohort that we have had demand, whether for the public services card or not, because people have gone through a safe registration process that verifies their identity and they wonder why they cannot use their own discretion to present that card on the voluntary basis to a third party to verify their identity. That is essentially where the demand has come from."* [14]

A similar perspective was stated by Minister for Social Protection, Deputy Dara Calleary, in an answer to PQ on the SAFE registration process of the PSC on 30 April 2026:

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[13] Joint Committee on Social Protection, Rural and Community Development debate - Wednesday, 29 Apr 2026

[14] Joint Committee on Social Protection, Rural and Community Development debate - Wednesday, 29 Apr 2026

> *"I have recently brought forward proposed legislation under the Scheme of the Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill 2026, which will allow a PSC holder to use their card for identity purposes, at his or her own discretion, in exactly the same way as they can use a driving licence or passport.*
>
> *I believe this measure will be of particular help to people who do not hold a valid passport or driving licence. I am very mindful of the cost a person incurs when they get, or renew, a passport or drivers licence. There is no fee to get, or renew, a PSC. My department is repeatedly asked why it is not possible for a person to use their PSC to verify their identity, for example for opening an account in a financial institution or utility company, when other state provided identity documents are accepted."* [15]

It should be noted in this regard that it was confirmed, in response to a question as to evidence and data basis for the DSP arriving at this decision, at the relevant PLS hearing of the Joint Committee, that no specific evaluation or survey research was undertaken to lend concrete evidence of a public demand that the PSC might function as an identity card with the addition voluntarily of a person's data of birth on the PSC. [16]

PSC

The PSC was first introduced in 2011 as part of the then Government's Public Service Reform plan.[17] Prior to that, in 2005, the then Government approved a rules based standard for establishing and authenticating an individual's identity for the purposes of access to public services.[18] This standard is known as the Standard Authentication Framework Environment – or SAFE. A Public Services Card (PSC) is issued to an individual who has successfully completed a registration process to a substantial level of assurance known as SAFE 2.[19] SAFE Registration is therefore the process used by the DSP to verify the identity of their service users.[20] [21]

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[15] Public Services Card – Thursday, 30 Apr 2026 – Parliamentary Questions (34th Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas

[16] Public Services Card – Thursday, 30 Apr 2026 – Parliamentary Questions (34th Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas

[17] Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (2011) Public Service Reform Plan: Government Statement, Dublin: DPER

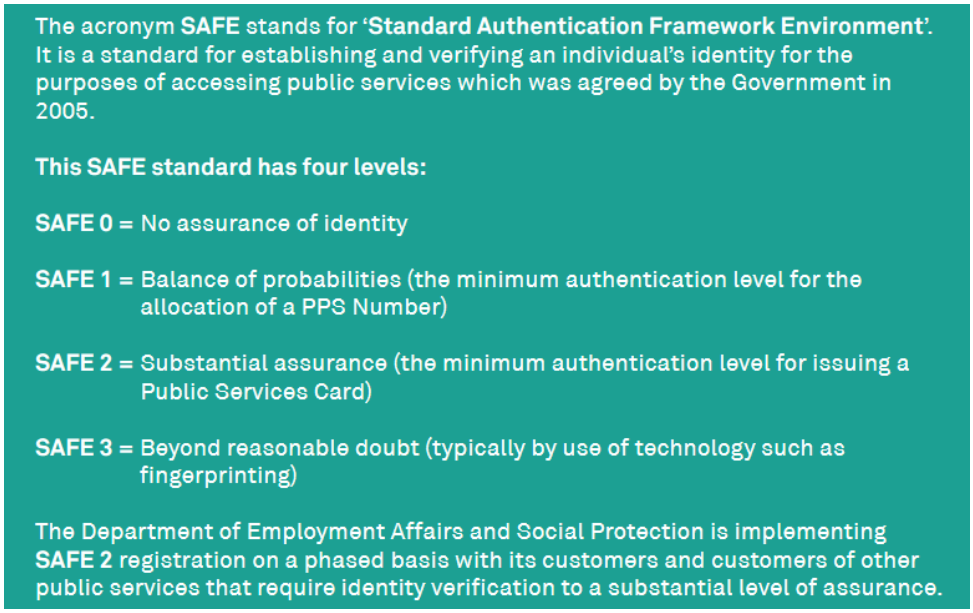
[18] Comptroller and Auditor General (2016) Report on the roll-out of the public services card

[19] Statement on Public Services Card – 25th August 2017

[20] Department of Social Protection, SAFE Registration and the Public Services Card (PSC)

[21] For more information, see DSP (2017) Comprehensive guide to Safe Registration and the Public Services Card

Figure 1: Overview of SAFE Registration standards



Source: DSP (2017) Comprehensive Guide to SAFE Registration and the Public Services Card, Dublin: DSP

In 2009, a report by the then Joint Committee on Social and Family Affairs recommended the introduction of a national identity card to coincide with the development of a public services card.[22] Under Action 2.4 (iii) (under the section entitled "eGovernment/ICT, Information Sharing and Customer Service" of its Pubic Service Reform plan in November 2011, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform states in respect of the PSC: "Seek Government approval to mandate all public bodies to use the PSC as the means of accessing high-services or explain to the Department why this is not possible".[23] As is shown in the section below, the PSC card and its perceived current or future use as form of national identity has been a subject of debate ever since.

In 2024, the then Minister for Social Protection, Deputy Heather Humphreys, gave the following answer to a Parliamentary Question (PQ) about whether the PSC was likely to be used as a form of identification – stating that the PSC is not a national identity card but its purpose is to go beyond citizen interactions with the DSP solely, toward a wider range of public services:

[22] Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Bill 2017: Second Stage (Resumed) – Dáil Éireann (32nd Dáil) – Tuesday, 3 Oct 2017 – Houses of the Oireachtas

[23] DPER (2011) Public Service Reform Plan

> *"The Public Services Card (PSC) is not a national identity card. Rather, it aims to provide a means of identification for an individual in respect of the provision of public services.*
>
> *Social welfare legislation provides that a person can only use their PSC for the purposes of a transaction with a body which has been specified in Schedule 5 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 (as amended). It also provides that only a specified body may request a person's PSC for the purpose of transacting with that body.*
>
> *Since its inception in the late 1990s, the Public Services Card (PSC) has always been intended as a physical token of identity to be used in transactions between the citizens and the State, not just between citizens and my Department.*
>
> *One of my functions as Minister for Social Protection is the authentication of the identity, as set out in the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005.*
>
> *Once a person has successfully authenticated their identity, they are issued with a PSC which can be used as proof of identity when transacting with certain public bodies ("specified bodies") listed in that Act."*[24]

In 2026, the Public Services Card (PSC) functions as a government-issued identification card used solely to securely access to various public services. A PSC verifies a person's identity, increasingly through the MyGovID digital platform for online service, and is required for claiming social welfare payments, first-time adult passport applications, citizenship processes, and driver theory tests.[25]

Number of PSCs active and sharing of PSC data

In 2022, the then Minister for Social Protection stated in response to a PQ, that at that point in time there were 5.29 million PSCs issued to 3.67 million persons since 2011, and provided the following annual breakdown of PSCs issued by year to 2022, shown in Table 2 below.[26]

Table 2: Number of PSCs issued per year 2011-2022

Year	PSCs issued
2011	4,008
2012	82,212

[24] Public Services Card – Wednesday, 20 Mar 2024 – Parliamentary Questions (33rd Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas. See also this Briefing Paper's appendix which sets out the current list of public bodies named in Schedule 5 of the SWCA.

[25] CitizensInformation.ie: Public Services Card; Gov.ie: How to get a Public Services Card

[26] Public Services Card – Tuesday, 26 Jul 2022 – Parliamentary Questions (33rd Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas

Year	PSCs issued
2013	387,340
2014	656,083
2015	630,100
2016	602,895
2017	676,438
2018	603,841
2019	522,131
2020	326,818
2021	442,584
2022	356,707
Total	5,291,157

Source: Public Services Card – Tuesday, 26 Jul 2022 – Parliamentary Questions (33rd Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas

Table 3 below shows the age and gender summary of PSCs issued between 2011 and 2022.

Table 3: Age and Gender breakdown of PSCs issued per year 2011-2022

Age	Male	Female	Total
Under 18	10,647	8,212	18,859
18+	1,754,349	1,896,633	3,650,982
Total	1,764,996	1,904,845	3,669,841

Source: Public Services Card – Tuesday, 26 Jul 2022 – Parliamentary Questions (33rd Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas

In addition, in response to a PQ in April 2026, Minister for Social Protection, Deputy Dara Calleary stated that there are over 3.4 million *verified* MyGovID accounts.[27] Verified MyGovID accounts, as opposed to basic MyGovID accounts, require a PSC among other things. Table 4

[27] Public Services Card – Thursday, 30 Apr 2026 – Parliamentary Questions (34th Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas

below shows the current level and detail of sharing of personal information from MyGovID with various public services.

Table 4: Sharing of information from MyGovID with Partners

MyGovID Partner	Full Name	Email Address	PPS Number	Date of Birth	Gender	Nationality	Address	Phone Number
MyWelfare	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Revenue Cáin agus Custaim na hÉireann Irish Tax and Customs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RSA NDLS National Driver Licence Service	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
National CHILDCARE Scheme Early Learning & Care	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
RSA MyRoadSafety	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
SUSI	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
JobsIreland.ie Connecting Employers and Jobseekers	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Voter. ie	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
MessagingIE	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓

MyGovID Partner	Full Name	Email Address	PPS Number	Date of Birth	Gender	Nationality	Address	Phone Number
seirbhís tacaíochta cinnteoireachta decision support service	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
HAP Íocaíocht Cúnaimh Tithíochta Housing Assistance Payment	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
myCoCo Local Authority Services	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
An Roinn Tithíochta, Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
An Roinn Iompair Department of Transport	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí Department of Social Protection Seirbhísí um Chlárú Sibhialta Civil Registration Services	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
HSE	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
MyFuture Fund	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓

Source: MyGovID - How secure is it?

The PSC debate

The introduction and subsequent expansion of the PSC has faced ongoing debate, with concerns raised regarding data privacy and safeguards. This debate has also touched on the legal basis of the PSC and its evolution in respect of acting as a form of national identity card. The following (Table 6) presents a brief overview of the debate and developments to date culminating in the GS.[28]

[28] It should be noted that this Table outlining the timeline of events does not purport to be comprehensive or definitive. Its purpose is to give Members a sense of the debate around the PSC over a number of years up to the publication of the current GS and the proposed Head 7 providing for amendments to the legislation underpinning the PSC.

Table 5: Time line and commentary on events associated with the PSC

Year	Timeline event
2011	1. The Public Services Card was introduced as a pilot project for social welfare recipients in Tullamore, Sligo and the Kings Inn area of Dublin.[29]
2012	2. Beginning of the process of rolling out PSCs to all social welfare recipients, including those claiming child benefit. The government stated that the PSC would increase efficiency in delivering public services and help it to tackle social welfare fraud. It noted that it would take several years to roll out with an estimated cost of €24 million.
2016	3. It was reported in the media that anyone who was applying for a passport for the first time would require a PSC.
October 2016	4. The Comptroller and Auditor General reports that the costs associated with PSC had risen to €60 million and that the business case for the PSC was unclear.[30]

[29] The L&RS were not able to locate a published evaluation of this pilot phase of the PSC. See also Comptroller and Auditor General (2015) Report on the roll-out of the PSC

[30] Comptroller and Auditor General (2015) Report on the roll-out of the PSC

Year	Timeline event
July 2017	5. Publication and Second Stage debate of the *Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Bill 2017*, section 5 of which is largely a forerunner of Head 7 of the *General Scheme of the Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill 2026*. The 2017 Bill lapsed on the calling of the 2020 General Election and the dissolution of Dáil Éireann in January 2020. The Bill was not subsequently restored to the Order Paper. Nevertheless in the debate on the 2017 Bill, opposition Members raised questions about, among others, the following aspects of the PSC: - What is the current public appetite for a national identity card, especially where one is usable with commercial, non-public service providers; - Lack of debate on the policy rationale and public service need for the changes proposed; - Broad data protection issues; - Confusion around the extent to which presentation of the PSC is 'mandatory' for citizens when accessing public services; - Possibility of fraudulent reproduction of the PSC if it is to be used officially as a form of identity; - Status of the PSC in the light of Data Protections probe into the PSC; and, - Extent of controls on access to the database underpinning the PSC.[31]

[31] Social Welfare, Pensions and Civil Registration Bill 2017 – No. 94 of 2017 – Houses of the Oireachtas

Year	Timeline event
August 2017	6. Media reports on a pensioner who asked the DSP to prove that the PSC was mandatory. The pensioner in her 70s revealed that she had not received her pension in 18 months and was owed around €13,000 because she had refused to register for a PSC. 7. In turn, the Irish Times reported that all persons wishing to claim dental and optical benefits, covered by PRSI, would soon need the card. As would anyone applying for SUSI student grants and for drivers' licences. 8. Also in August 2017, the then Minister for Social Protection, Deputy Regina Doherty caused uncertainty when she stated that the PSC was "mandatory but not compulsory". 9. The then Minister, Deputy Doherty, also stated that around 50 public bodies had access to the information on the PSC cards. The Irish Independent reported subsequently that it was estimated that as many as 120 public bodies could access the data held on the PSC. 10. Department of Social Protection Statement on the PSC 11. Publication by the Department of Social Protection of a Comprehensive Guide to SAFE Registration and the Public Services Card
September 2017	12. Solicitor Fred Logue, writing in the Irish Times, stated that according to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights the Irish State had to demonstrate that the card was necessary. 13. The Sunday Business Post reported that citizens aged 15 and 16 had been issued with the card throughout the previous year, as it had been rolled out to all Transition Year students.
February 2018	14. The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL), at a hearing of the Joint Committee on Employment Affairs and Social Protection, stated that the PSC should be discontinued in its current form as it breached European data protection laws. 15. At the same Joint Committee meeting, solicitor Simon McGarr of Data Compliance Europe warned the Committee that the state could be liable to pay compensation to all of the 3 million people who had the card at that point in time – if the government was found in breach of the EU data protection laws.
September 2018	16. Mark Tighe in the Sunday Times wrote that the State had been given a number of weeks to show that there was a legal basis for compelling citizens to have a PSC in order to access non-social welfare services. According to Tighe, the DSP had told the Data Protection Commissioner that the legal basis for the cards was the SWCA 2005. It was reported also that the Data Protection Commissioner's draft report was expected to find that that act did not provide a reliable legal basis to compel citizens, who were not accessing social welfare, to get the PSC.

Year	Timeline event
2019	17. Publication of Final Investigation Report by the Data Protection Commission on "An investigation by the Data Protection Commission in respect of the processing of personal data by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection in relation to the Public Services Card". 18. The report finds, among other things, questions in respect of State's retention of personal data linked to the PSC, while it also found that people could not be compelled to use the PSC for access to other, non-welfare, public services. The DSP initially sought to challenge the DPC's findings.[32]
July 2021	19. DPC begins inquiry examining the DSP's processing of biometric facial templates, and usage of associated facial matching technologies, as part of the registration process for the PSC. This process is known as "SAFE 2 registration", outlined earlier.
December 2021	20. Settlement reached between DSP and the DPC in respect of the findings from the 2019 Commission investigation report on the PSC.[33]
June 2025	21. Conclusion of DPC investigation into use of facial matching technology in connection with the PSC by the DSP. Findings include DSP infringement of various articles of GDPR. DPC issues the DSP administrative fines totalling €550,000, and issued an order to the DSP requiring it to cease processing of biometric data in connection with SAFE 2 registration within 9 months.[34]
July 2025	22. The DSP lodge an appeal in the High Court to the findings of the DPC investigation the processing of biometric data as part of the PSC process.[35]

[32] Law Society Gazette, Data watchdog and DSP settle Public Services Card dispute, 10 December 2021.

[33] DSP (2021) Agreement between the Department of Social Protection and the Data Protection Commission

[34] DPC (2025) DPC announces conclusion of investigation into use of facial matching technology in connection with the Public Services Card by the Department of Social Protection; Citing ICCL/DRI's submission to the Joint Committee for the ongoing PLS of the General Scheme: "DPC found the Department had: 1. Unlawfully collected facial records (biometric data) from 70% of the population of Ireland over 15 years; 2. Held those data unlawfully; 3. Failed to tell Public Services Card users why it was collecting their facial records, or to show whether it was legal; 4. Failed to carry out an adequate DPIA by failing to assess the necessity and proportionality of the facial data collection and failing to assess the risks to the rights and freedoms of PSC users."

[35] Government's appeal of fine over Public Services Card a 'waste of taxpayer's money', says expert, Irish Examiner, 9 July 2025.

Year	Timeline event
April 2026	23. Publication of GS of the *Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill*, containing Head 7 which seeks to amend the legal framework of the PSC to allow for it to be used on a voluntary basis as form of identification with certain bodies.

Source: L&RS, various as footnoted references show and adapted from Timeline: The Public Services Card saga. TheJournal.ie

As Table 6 above shows, the PSC has been a contentious issue in policy and legal terms since it was first mooted, and its subsequent introduction. As the Table above suggests, the nature of the debates are varied and cover a range of issues from the legal basis of the PSC, issues of privacy and data protection, national identification systems requiring transparency and debate, and so forth. In reality, many of these issues and debates are intertwined. To assist Members in their oversight of the Bill, the following table highlights the main areas of the public debate.[36]

Table 6: Summary of main areas of public debate around the PSC

Issue	Summary
Legal basis of the PSC	Since the initial roll-out of the PSC and its expansion over the years, there have been a number of questions posed about the legal basis of the project.[37] This has been rebutted by the DSP [38]
National Identity Card	One of the criticisms of the PSC over years, and currently in respect of the GS, is that the card is being developed into a national identity care by stealth and without a firm legal basis.

[36] Please refer to the L&RS Policy and Legislative Briefing Paper on the General Scheme of the Bill for more detail.

[37] See for example: Public Services Card - Irish Council for Civil Liberties; 260527-ICCL-DRI-PSC-Bill-submission.pdf; Concerns over use of Public Services Card as age ID, RTE.ie, 15 April 2026; No legal basis for mandatory Public Services Card to access State services other than welfare, landmark probe finds, 16 August, 2019; Government to make Public Services Card a form of identification, Journal.ie, 14 April 2026; Appeal over use of Public Services Card dropped by Dept, RTE.ie, 10 December 2021; Timeline: The Public Services Card saga , TheJournal.ie, 21 January 2019; and Dept says Public Services Card has clear legal basis, RTE.ie, 7 February 2019

[38] Dept says Public Services Card has clear legal basis; Public Services Card – Thursday, 19 Jun 2025 – Parliamentary Questions (34th Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas;

Issue	Summary
Fraud and security	The decision to develop a PSC envisaged that it could be used for all existing and future card-based public services over time using the SAFE standard. Even where agencies might need to issue specific cards for their services for operational or legal reasons, the development of the SAFE standard would provide benefits through secure identification and authentication of the user.[39]
The business case for the PSC	Since its introduction, it has been reported in various discussions that the business case for the PSC has not been clearly made. This was most clearly stated by the Comptroller and Auditor General as part of the hearing on the audit of the social protection vote on 20 October 2016.[40]

Source: L&RS drawn from L&RS Policy and Legislative Briefing Paper on the General Scheme of the Bill for more detail.

Social Welfare Appeals Tribunal

The Social Welfare Appeals Office was established to provide an independent appeals service for persons who disagree with decision of Social Welfare Deciding Officers or Designated Persons relating to entitlement to social welfare payments and insurability of employment. The legal basis for social welfare appeals is set out in Part 10 of the Principal Act and in related Regulations made on the basis of that Act.

Currently appeals can be made against decision in respect of a wide range of social welfare schemes that are covered under the following broad areas:[41]

- Pensions
- Working age income and employment supports
- Illness, disability and carers
- Children
- Other (including PRSI class, liable relative, insurability of employment etc.)

In terms of organisation, the Social Welfare Appals Office is led by the Chief Appeals Officer who has overall responsibility for the administration of the appeals service. There are two

[39] Comptroller and Auditor General (2015) Report on the roll-out of the PSC

[40] Roll-out of Public Services Card cost €60m, RTE.ie, 20 October 2016

[41] For a full list of the individual schemes, see jurisdiction-of-appeals-process.pdf

Deputy Chief Appeals Officers. .The Chief Appeals Officer, Deputy Chief Appeals Officers and Appeals Officers are appointed by the Minister for Social Protection.

At present, the Principal Act currently provides the statutory basis for Deciding Officers (DO) to seek the opinion of a Medical Assessor (MAO) in determining any question under section 300 (Decisions by DOs) or a revised decision regarding that question under section 301 (Revisions of decision by Dos) which relates to entitlement to certain benefits. At present, this is a discretionary power. The relevant section of the SWCA however requires a DO to have regard to that opinion, if sought, in making decisions.[42]

The Department of Social Protection's commentary on the relevant Heads in the General Scheme of the Bill state that these "provisions provide clarity and transparency around the procurement of, and reliance on, MAO's in decisions made by Dos".[43] However, it notes that this provision does not extend to decisions made under sections 311 (Appeal and references to appeals officers), 317 (Revision of appeals office or decision of appeals officer) or 318 (Revision by Chief Appeals Officer of decision of appeals officer) of the Act, despite the fact that MAO opinions are routinely relied on in the course of the appeals and review process and are referred to by Appeals Officers (AO) in their decisions.

Thus the rationale for the change is summarised by the Department of Social Protection's commentary in the General Scheme as follows:[44]

> *"Such use and reliance should similarly carry through to the appeals or revision process under s.311, or sections 317 or 318 respectively either, particularly when, as is usually the case, a customer submits updated relevant medical or other information with their appeal or revision request, and which the original Medical Assessor will not have seen. A discretionary power in primary legislation, at appeals or revision stage, to procure a MAO, in the same way as DOs at original consideration stage, would assist the decision-maker, if they consider it necessary, to be able to objectively evaluate any new medical information or evidence provided as part of the appeal or revision process, make a more informed decision on eligibility."*

In terms of the power to remit of appeals decisions under the Act, currently where an AO makes a decision, the relevant can appeal that decision based on an error in fact or law to the Chief Appeals Officer (provided for under section 318 Revision by Chief Appeals Officer of decision of appeals officer) of the Act). The Chief Appeals Officer (CAO) will view the whole appeal but does not currently have the power to remit back in the process. Thus for errors of law that come up in the appeals office decision, there is currently no option for the CAO to remit that back to the AO. The Bill seeks to remedy this and provide for the CAO to remit

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[42] General_Scheme_of_the_Social_Welfare_and_Other_Matters_Bill_2026.pdf (Note: there are no page numbers in the General Scheme as published).

[43] Ibid.

[44] General_Scheme_of_the_Social_Welfare_and_Other_Matters_Bill_2026.pdf

decisions referred to her/him back to the relevant AO.[45] This would, among other things, suggest as an improvement in the efficiency and transparency of the appeals system.

It should be noted that this proposed amendment is part of what was referred to as the legislative modernisation process,[46] which in turn is the purpose of many of the technical elements of the General Scheme, and thus subsequently the Bill.

Technical amendments

Pre-retirement Allowance

The Pre-retirement Allowance was a social welfare payment that was awarded to those nearing retirement age who were previously long-term recipients of the equivalent payment to today's Job-seeker's Assistance and moreover who qualified for the allowance in respect of a means test. The Pre-retirement Allowance was abolished for new entrants on 4 July 2007.[47] Pre-Retirement Allowance has been closed to new applicants since 4 July 2007 and there are no longer any customers in receipt of this payment. The Bill removes references to this payment.[48]

Tax Employment regulations

The Income Tax (Employments) (Consolidated) Regulations 2001 (S.I. No. 559 of 2001) has been revoked and updated by the Income Tax (Employments) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 345 of 2018). The purpose of the Bill in this regard is to update the references in the SWCA to the new regulations.

Redundancy payments and job seeker's benefit

Under the SWCA, a person may be disqualified from receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit, a PRSI-based payment, in a number of defined circumstances. One circumstance currently is where a person, aged under 55 years, receives a lump-sum redundancy payment of over €50,000 may be disqualified from Jobseeker's Benefit for a period of up to nine weeks. With the introduction of Jobseeker's Pay-Related Benefit from 31 March 2025, this particular disqualification is no longer required.[49] The Bill seeks to remove this specific disqualification from the Principal Act.

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[45] Statement of Department of Social Protection Official, Joint Committee on Social Protection, Rural and Community Development, 29 April 2009.

[46] General_Scheme_of_the_Social_Welfare_and_Other_Matters_Bill_2026.pdf

[47] Pre-Retirement Allowance – Thursday, 8 Dec 2016 – Parliamentary Questions (32nd Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas

[48] General_Scheme_of_the_Social_Welfare_and_Other_Matters_Bill_2026.pdf

[49] General_Scheme_of_the_Social_Welfare_and_Other_Matters_Bill_2026.pdf

Bereaved Partner's Pensions

The Bereaved Partner's (Contributory) Pension is a weekly payment to the partner of a deceased person. A partner can be a husband, wife, civil partner or cohabitant.

This payment was called the Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension. In July 2025, the payment was renamed and extended to include cohabitants (cohabitating couples).[50]

The Bereaved Partner's Pension was introduced by *Social Welfare (Bereaved Partner's Pension and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2025*. This Act gave effect to the O'Meara judgment[51] (see below for further details) by expanding entitlement to social welfare schemes aimed at bereaved partners and families to qualified cohabitants and their children.[52]

The current Bill seeks to make reference to Bereaved Partner's Pension in the SWCA, consequent to the *Social Welfare (Bereaved Partner's Pension and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2025*.

Amendments to the Civil Registration Act 2004

The Civil Registration Act 2004

Civil registration refers to the official registration of "life events" for those resident in the State. The *Civil Registration Act 2004* (CRA), as amended, provides for among other things the consolidation of relevant laws, and the modernisation, organisation of the Civil Registration Service.[53]

The CVA has provisions relating to administration of the service, births and stillbirths, gender recognition, adoptions, marriages, deaths, parental orders for surrogacy, divorce, civil partnerships etc.[54]

The General Register Office (Oifig An Ard-Chláraitheora) under the auspices of the Department of Social Protection is the central civil repository for records relating to the registration of "life events".

These civil registers create a legal document to establish and protect the identity and rights of the person. For example, when a birth is registered, it automatically results in the allocation of a Personal Public Service Number (PPSN). This number is unique to each person and becomes the basis for identity and all other services delivered by the Department and other public bodies. [55]

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[50] For additional detail, see Bereaved Partner's (Contributory) Pension

[51] John O'Meara & Ors v. The Minister for Social Protection & Ors [2024] IESC 1, per O'Donnell CJ (Dunne J.; O'Malley J.; Murray J.; and Collins J concurring)

[52] For more details, see L&RS Bill Digest, Social Welfare (Bereaved Partner's Pension) Bill 2025

[53] L&RS paraphrased from Civil Registration Act 2004 – No. 3 of 2004 – Houses of the Oireachtas

[54] Civil Registration Act 2004

[55] For more, see www.civilregistrationservice.ie and Annual Report of the General Register Office 2024

There is a legal requirement on every person to notify the Civil Registration Service (CVS) of births, marriages and deaths that occur in the State. Registration data collected and recorded by the CVS allows for the compilation of vital statistics and the making of population and related projections by the Central Statistics Office.

Table 7 below shows the breakdown of certificates issued over the last number of years.

Table 7: Number of Certificates issued by Life Event Type

Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Birth	172,169	198,234	249,859	241,375	235,881
Death	88,710	90,259	102,789	104,220	103,844
Marriage	38,533	45,308	62,465	59,916	58,217
Adoptions	759	807	864	870	940
Stillbirth	270	273	382	321	280
Civil Partnership	60	77	86	57	50
Total	300,501	334,958	416,445	406,759	399,212

Source: Annual report of An tArd-Chláraitheoir to the Minister for Social Protection on the operation of the Civil Registration Acts for 2024

Proposed changes

Register of lived identity

In March 2026, the Minister for Children, Disability and Equality, Norma Foley TD, launched a public consultation about proposed changes to assister those persons affected by illegal birth registration legislation.[56] Illegal birth registration can occur where the persons named on a child's birth certification are the adoptive and not the biological parents. This may result in an incorrect birth certification or in some cases two birth certificates.

The *Birth Information and Tracing Act 2022* introduced measures to address issues arising for people affected by illegal and incorrect birth registration. These measures included amendments to the *Civil Registration Act 2004* to vindicate a person's right to an accurate birth

[56] Minister Foley Launches Public Consultation on Proposed Changes to Illegal Birth Registration Legislation.

registration and to give legal recognition to their 'lived' identities – i.e. the name on their illegal birth registration.[57]

It is noted by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality that in the context of the above measures:[58]

> *"people whose births were illegally registered have requested further changes to widen access to their birth registration and to revise some of the terminology used in the legislation."*

According to the Department the proposed amendments will allow people whose births were illegally registered to give the public access to their birth registration, or alternatively, nominate one or more people to access their birth registration (for example, future descendants), where they so wish. In addition, this will not affect the rights of people who wish their registration to remain private.[59]

Under the changes proposed in the Bill, the birth register containing a person's original incorrect birth registration, currently referred as the 'register under Part 3B' of the Act, would be renamed as the *'register of lived identity'*. An entry on this 'register of lived identity' could be made publicly available or to specific persons (e.g. future descendants) if a person actively decides to do so.

In this regard, the Department has stated that:[60]

> *"[i]nstead of saying that a person's incorrect birth registration is 'cancelled', it is proposed that the legislation should say that the incorrect birth registration has been 'withdrawn'. This is because many affected persons said the use of the word "cancel" was seen as being equivalent to their lived identity being cancelled. Many affected persons continue to use their lived identities."*

Technical amendments

The Bill, amending the *Civil Registration Act 2004*, also seeks to allow the registration of a birth to include the name of a father where a Government agency (e.g. The Child and Family Agency/Tusla) is the qualified informant, and that agency has been granted a court order naming the father of a child under section 35 of the *Status of Children Act 1987*. Currently, only the mother, father or the child if they are over 18 can use a court order to register a birth and to name a person as the father of a child.

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[57] Minister Foley Launches Public Consultation on Proposed Changes to Illegal Birth Registration Legislation.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

According to the commentary provided in the General Scheme of the Bill:[61]

> *"There are situations where the child's birth has been registered and the child is in the care of the State. It is in the interest of the child to have their birth re-registered with the correct parents recorded. The parents of the child in some instances will not cooperate with the State in fulfilling their duty to re-register the correct particulars of the birth."*

In this regard, the Bill seeks to provide for a Government agency (such as Tusla) to re-register the birth of the child with the child's father details on foot of a court order naming him as the father of the child.

Other technical amendments proposed in the Bill are:

24. A medical practitioner who attended a deceased person outside of a hospital or other institution, to authorise a person to perform the medical practitioner's duty to notify the particulars of a death.
25. To correct a factual or clerical error in an online registration where that error has been notified to an tArd-Chláraitheoir by any person including the staff of an tArd-Chláraitheoir.
26. The required particulars of a birth and stillbirth are amended to allow for online registrations where it is not necessary for the signatures of the qualified informants to be captured.

Amendments to the Charities Act 2005

Charities Act 2009

The *Charities Act 2009* provides for the regulation of charitable organisations in Ireland. The main provisions of the *Charities Act 2009* came into effect in October 2014. The Act reformed the law on charities in Ireland to ensure greater accountability and transparency and to ensure that charitable status is not exploited. The Act also, through its provisions, seeks overall to enhance public trust and confidence in charities and create transparency across the charities sector more generally.[62]

The *Charities Act 2009* defines a charitable organisation as the trustees of a charitable trust or a body corporate (this usually means a company) or an unincorporated body:

27. That promotes a charitable purpose only;
28. That is required under its constitution or governing documents to apply all of its property to further that purpose except for money used in its operation and maintenance (for example, staff wages) and, in the case of religious organisations or communities, money used for the accommodation and care of the members of the organisation or community; and

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[61] General_Scheme_of_the_Social_Welfare_and_Other_Matters_Bill_2026.pdf

[62] Citizens Information Board (2018) *Charities regulation in Ireland*, Relate: The journal of developments in social services, policy and legislation in Ireland, Dublin: CIB.

29. None of whose property is payable to the members of that body except in specific circumstances. [63]

The *Charities Act 2009* also provides for the specific types of organisations which are not, and cannot become, charities.

In addition, the Act established the Charities Regulatory Authority as the body to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Act. The Charities Regulatory Authority (or Charities Regulator) is an independent body, primarily responsible for ensuring the compliance of charitable organisations with the Act and maintaining the public register of charitable organisations operating in Ireland.

Of particular relevance to this General Scheme, the Act provides for the Charity Appeals Tribunal, which deals with appeals under the Act. The Charity Appeals Tribunal is a statutory body established in August 2016. The function of the tribunal is to hear and adjudicate on appeals against certain decisions of the Charities Regulator, under Section 45 of the *Charities Act 2009.* [64] The Tribunal is independent in the performance of its statutory functions. Section 79 of the *Charities Act* provides that the tribunal may make its own rules of procedure (with the approval of the Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht).

In the case of the Tribunal, an appeal to must be brought within 21 days of the decision in question. The Minister may appeal to the Tribunal against a decision by the Charities Regulator to register an organisation. The Charities Regulator is bound by the decision of the Tribunal. A decision of the Tribunal may be appealed to the High Court on a point of law.[65]

Proposed changes

Operation of the Charity Appeals Tribunal

The Charity Appeal Tribunal was established under Part 5 of the *Charities Act 2009*. The *Charities (Amendment) Act 2024* contains several amendments in relation to the Charity Appeals Tribunal. These amendments include an expansion of the grounds on which an appeal can be brought to the Tribunal, and a provision that will allow for an increase in the membership of the Tribunal to 'not less than 5 and not more than 7 members'.[66] The Bill proposes to reduce the quorum to three, provide for a Deputy Chairperson of the Tribunal, who can deputise for the Chairperson comprising the quorum of three. In the hearings of the Joint

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[63] Citizens Information Board (2018) *Charities regulation in Ireland*, Relate: The journal of developments in social services, policy and legislation in Ireland, Dublin: CIB

[64] Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (2018) Charity Appeals Tribunal

[65] Charity Appeals Tribunal (Charities Act 2009) Rules 2018, S.I. No. 206 of 2018.

[66] General_Scheme_of_the_Social_Welfare_and_Other_Matters_Bill_2026.pdf

Committee as part of their PLS on the General Scheme, an official from the Department or Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht stated the following in this context:[67]

> *"[T]hese amendments are to assist the smooth operation of the tribunal. At the moment, all five members of the Charity Appeals Tribunal have to be there for a hearing and that is quite logistical, etc. The 2009 Act also states that the chairperson has to be there for a hearing as well. As the work of the tribunal has stepped up and there are more hearings in place at the moment, logistically, it is quite difficult. What we are proposing through these amendments is that we will allow for a quorum for the tribunal so not all members have to be there."*

And that,[68]

> *"We are proposing that quorum would be three going forward. At the moment, all five members have to be there. Additional duties are being assigned to the tribunal or different appeals now that can be heard with the 2004 (amendment) Act as well. We are expecting a much busier tribunal and for the logistics of operations of it, we are proposing the quorum and the deputy chair."*

Procedural amendments

A further amendment proposed by the Bill in this Part seeks to provide that witnesses before the Charity Appeals Tribunal will have an immunity from disclosing information or providing evidence about a certain subject.

In this regard, the commentary in the General Scheme in respect of this amendment states:[69]

> *"This amendment provides that witnesses before the Tribunal will have an immunity from disclosing information or providing evidence about a certain subject. It is considered good legislative practice, and mirrors provisions given to witnesses in many other tribunals such as the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (International Protection Act 2015, section 42(10)) and in the High Court.*
>
> *The privilege referred to is 'absolute privilege', as defined in Section 17 of the Defamation Act 2009. Absolute privilege applies when evidence is given before a Court and before certain tribunals. The absolute privilege that applies to evidence given before the High Court is the same absolute privilege that applies to evidence given before any court in that all such evidence is protected by absolute privilege".*

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[67] Statement of Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht Official, Joint Committee on Social Protection, Rural and Community Development, 29 April 2009.

[68] Ibid

[69] General_Scheme_of_the_Social_Welfare_and_Other_Matters_Bill_2026.pdf

Pre-legislative scrutiny

Overview of pre-legislative scrutiny (PLS)

The Oireachtas Joint Committee on Social Protection, Rural and Community Development undertook PLS of the General Scheme of the Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill. PLS on the General Scheme of the Bill took place on the 29 April,[70] 12 May and 27 May 2026. The Joint Committee on Social Protection Rural and Community Development published their report on the PLS in July 2026.

It should be noted that a number of Heads included in General Scheme but are not included in the Bill, they are:

- Head 8: Code for determining employment status
- Head 9: Time limit for review
- Head 14: Exempt the mother of a child from providing details relating to the father of the child in the case where the father of the child is dead
- Part of Head 18: (c)in Part 5 - addition of “Country of Birth” and “Country of Citizenship”

In tandem, section 7 (References to bereaved partner’s pension) and section 3 (Repeal) is included in the Bill but was not part of the General Scheme.

PLS Report

The Committee’s PLS report listed 24 recommendations under the following themes, as set out in Table 3 below:

Table 8: Themes of Joint Committee's PLS recommendations on the General Scheme of the Bill

Number	Theme	Recommendations
1	Digitalisation of social protection services	3 (Nos. 1-3)
2	Accessibility and digital exclusion	3 (Nos. 4-6)
3	Data protection and privacy	6 (Nos. 7-12)
4	Public Services Card and identity measures	4 (Nos. 13-16)
5	Data sharing and use of personal data	2 (Nos. 17 & 18)

[70] This debate starts at page 19 of the pdf transcript.

Number	Theme	Recommendations
6	Operation of the Social Welfare Appeals System	2 (Nos. 19 & 20)
7	Civil Registration and sensitive cases	3 (Nos. 21-23)
8	Charities regulation and Tribunal functioning	1 (No. 24)

Source: L&RS, extracted from the PLS report of the Joint Committee on the General Scheme of the Bill

How these key issues are treated in the Bill is considered in the following sections.

Table summary of PLS recommendations

This section seeks to assess the extent to which the key issues of concern raised in the Committee's **PLS report** have been addressed in the Bill, as presented for Second Stage (see Table 3). As part of the Bill Digest process, the L&RS compares the issues/recommendations outlined in the PLS report with their inclusion, partial or otherwise, in the subsequent Bill. We do this by asking the relevant Department (in this case the lead Department, the Department of Social Protection) to outline the extent to which, in their view, each of the key issues documented by the Joint Committee influenced the drafting of the Bill as published.

The L&RS is grateful to the Department of Social Protection for providing its commentary, which is included verbatim in Table 10 below, along with the traffic light symbols as determined by the L&RS.

In tandem with the Department's input, the L&RS also assesses the extent to which the PLS process impacted the drafting of the Bill. To do this, the L&RS uses a traffic light system, which allocates a green, orange, red or black symbol indicating respectively the extent to which the key issue has been accepted in full, in part, or is not reflected in the published Bill, or is not reflected in the Bill but additional considerations are present. This traffic light approach represents the L&RS's own, independent analysis of the Bill, and a key to this dashboard is shown in Table 9.

While the Committee's PLS report recommended that the Department address the concerns raised by stakeholders (see above), some of these concerns did not specify recommended actions for the Department or are policy-based concerns outside the scope of the Bill. Members should be aware that some of the black symbols in Table 3 appear for this reason.

Table 9: Key to traffic light dashboard comparing the Bill as published with Committee PLS recommendations

L&RS categorisation of the Department's response in the Bill to the key issue in the Committee's report	Traffic light dashboard used in Table summary of PLS key issues to highlight impact of the Committee's PLS conclusion
Key issue has clearly been accepted and is reflected in the Bill	
The Bill may be described as adopting an approach consistent with the key issue or the impact of the key issue is unclear	
Key issue has not been accepted or implemented in the Bill	
Key issue has not been implemented in the Bill, but additional considerations are present	

Table 10: Traffic light dashboard comparing the Bill as published with Committee PLS recommendations.

Commentary/recommendation as per Committee's PLS Report		Whether addressed (either in whole or in part) in the Bill – commentary from government department
1. The Committee recommends that the development and expansion of online services be implemented in a manner that ensures continued access for all service users, including those who may be unable to engage with digital systems, and that alternative access channels such as in-person and telephone services are maintained.		This item lies outside the scope of the Bill. The Department recognises that not all customers are prepared for, or comfortable with, using online services. The Department's strategy is to encourage the take-up of online services on a 'Digital by Desire' basis, rather than require or compel customers to use the online option.

Commentary/recommendation as per Committee's PLS Report		Whether addressed (either in whole or in part) in the Bill – commentary from government department
2. The Committee recommends that digital systems be designed and delivered in line with accessibility principles, supported by appropriate guidance and assistance to enable users to engage effectively with services.		This item lies outside the scope of the Bill. In designing and delivering digital services, accessibility is always a key focus in the Department, with accessibility testing completed on all services being developed on our digital platforms before they go live.
3. The Committee recommends that arrangements be put in place to monitor the impact of digitalisation on access to services, including for groups at greater risk of exclusion, and that service users are clearly informed of the range of available access options.		This item lies outside the scope of the Bill. The Department provides a wide range of access options — including face-to-face at the large network of Intreo Centres and Branch Offices across the country, telephone, and online services — to meet the diverse needs of customers. Customers are routinely advised of the various channels available to access Department services, enabling them to choose the option most appropriate to their circumstances.
4. The Committee recommends that the design and delivery of services, including digital systems, take account of the barriers experienced by individuals with limited digital skills or access, including older persons, people with disabilities, and those in areas with limited connectivity.		This item lies outside the scope of the Bill. The Department is committed to inclusive design, building websites that follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines principles of being Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust (POUR). The Department ensures that content on our platforms is presented in a way that can be perceived by all, that user interface components and navigation are operable, that the information and operation of the user interface are understandable, and that the content is reliable and compatible with assistive technologies and standards.

Commentary/recommendation as per Committee's PLS Report		Whether addressed (either in whole or in part) in the Bill – commentary from government department
5. The Committee recommends that processes be established to review service delivery across digital and non-digital channels, incorporating input from relevant representative organisations to support ongoing assessment and service improvement.		This item lies outside the scope of the Bill. The Department regularly engages with advocacy groups, representative organisations, and customers to inform continuous service improvement across all delivery channels. The Department also conducts monitoring of online services after they go live to understand the customer experience in using the service.
6. The Committee recommends that the digital skillsets of those aged 75 and above be captured and recorded and supports be provided for upskilling.		This item lies outside the scope of the Bill. Upskilling supports in terms of digital skills are provided for older people through a range of different initiatives delivered by various public service bodies.
7. The Committee recommends that a comprehensive review of the legislative framework underpinning the Public Services Card be undertaken to ensure that it sets out clearly defined purposes and an appropriate basis for all associated data processing, consistent with the GDPR and established legal principles. The Committee notes the concerns expressed in the hearings relating to biometric processing and expansion of Public Services Card use. The Committee also recommends that due consideration be afforded to these matters pending further legal clarification.		This item lies outside the scope of this Bill. The Public Services Card (PSC) related measures in the Bill are aimed at facilitating PSC holders who wish to use their PSC for identity or age verification purposes, on a purely voluntary basis, especially those who do not hold alternate state issued documents, such as a passport or driving licence. It should be noted that the Data Protection Commission (DPC) found that social welfare legislation provides a legal basis for the requirement that customers of the Department authenticate their identity by way of SAFE registration. The DPC acknowledges that other public bodies, as specified in social welfare legislation, may use the PSC as a means of verifying the identity of the people they deal with, provided other methods are available. The DPC decision, in June 2025, concerns the processing of biometric data as part of the SAFE Registration by the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The DSP believes that there is

Commentary/recommendation as per Committee's PLS Report		Whether addressed (either in whole or in part) in the Bill – commentary from government department
		an adequate legal basis, and following consultation with the Attorney General's Office, appealed the DPC decision in July 2025, in the manner provided for in the Data Protection Acts. The appeal was heard in June 2026, and the decision of the Court is awaited.
8. The Committee recommends that legislative provisions governing the collection, use, and sharing of personal data are clearly defined, including the purpose, scope, and legal basis for such processing and that the collection and processing of personal data be limited to what is strictly necessary for the specified purpose.		This item lies outside the scope of this Bill. The relevant provisions are in place. Any processing of personal data by the Department is limited to what is strictly necessary to deliver its statutory functions.
9. The Committee recommends that the processing of sensitive personal data is subject to clearly specified safeguards, including appropriate oversight and accountability arrangements.		This item lies outside the scope of this Bill. The relevant provisions are in place. The processing of personal data, including sensitive personal data, is subject to clearly specified safeguards under the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005, as amended and in accordance with GDPR requirements. In addition, the Department actively implements a range of oversight arrangements for the processing of all personal data carried out by the Department. It is considered that the existing arrangements in place are robust and adequate.

Commentary/recommendation as per Committee's PLS Report		Whether addressed (either in whole or in part) in the Bill – commentary from government department
10. The Committee recommends that systems involved in the collection, processing, and sharing of personal data are operated in a transparent manner, with clear and accessible information made available to individuals on how their personal data is used.		This item lies outside the scope of this Bill. The relevant provisions are in place. Transparency in the collection, processing, and sharing of personal data is already provided for under the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005 and GDPR. There are a range of information materials provided and publicly available to individuals about the personal data processed by the Department.
11. The Committee recommends that, in line with DPC guidance, that the draft legislation be strengthened by inclusion of a specific requirement to inform the individual that the use of the Public Services Card is voluntary.		The Department supports the underlying objective of this recommendation to provide clear information to individuals regarding the voluntary use of the PSC where applicable; however, a legislative provision may not be necessary to achieve this objective. The Department will ensure that information for data subjects will be clear on the voluntary use of their PSC as a form of identification and that the PSC cannot be compelled to be produced by non-specified bodies.
12. The Committee recommends that the Department of Social Protection institute a public awareness campaign in advance of enactment of the legislation underscoring the voluntary and consensual use of the Public Services Card as a form of identification and that it cannot be compelled by any third parties.		This item lies outside the scope of the Bill. The Department will ensure that information for data subjects will be clear on the voluntary use of their PSC for identity or age verification purposes and that the PSC cannot be compelled to be produced by non-specified bodies.

Commentary/recommendation as per Committee's PLS Report		Whether addressed (either in whole or in part) in the Bill – commentary from government department
13. The Committee recommends that the scope, limits to the scope and intended use of the Public Services Card be clearly set out in legislation.		The proposed amendments only provide for the voluntary use by a card holder of their PSC for identity or age verification purposes with non-specified bodies. Under current legislation, individuals cannot use their PSC in such circumstances, and the amendment aims to provide cardholders with this voluntary option.
14. The Committee recommends that any proposals to extend the use of the Public Services Card to additional services be subject to appropriate legislative processes and oversight.		The relevant measures are already in place. The proposed amendments enable individuals to voluntarily use their PSC for identity or age verification purposes with non-specified bodies, at their own discretion. The Department undertakes to clearly provide information to that effect.
15. The Committee recommends that the use of the Public Services Card be supported by clear safeguards and transparency measures, including clear rules on data use, together with the provision of accessible information to the public on its operation.		The relevant measures are already in place. Clear safeguards, transparency measures, and rules on data use already apply to the Public Services Card under the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005, as amended, and GDPR. In addition, the Department provides clear information, including through the Departments privacy statement, across publicly available information materials, and in communications to PSC cardholders. The proposed amendment does not alter these safeguards; it simply enables individuals to voluntarily use their PSC as proof of identity, or age, with non-specified bodies if they choose to do so. It remains the case under law that specified bodies may request the PSC and that non-specified bodies cannot request a PSC.
16. The Committee recommends that the voluntary nature of the Public Services Card be maintained in practice and monitored on ongoing basis, to		This item lies outside the scope of the Bill. The PSC related measures in the Bill are aimed at facilitating PSC holders who wish to use their PSC

Commentary/recommendation as per Committee's PLS Report		Whether addressed (either in whole or in part) in the Bill – commentary from government department
review that individuals are not disadvantaged where they choose not to use the card as a form of identification.		for identity or age verification purposes, on a purely voluntary basis. Importantly, the legislation which restricts the bodies or organisations who can request a PSC from an individual is not being changed. This means that it remains the case that only those bodies or organisations as specified in social welfare law may request a PSC. This safeguard continues in place. The Department will reinforce this through clear communications, including the Department's privacy statement, public information materials, and messaging directed to PSC cardholders, underscoring that PSC use as proof of identity with non-specified bodies is entirely voluntary.
17. The Committee recommends that any measures providing for data sharing between public bodies are subject to clear legislative provision, appropriate safeguards, and effective oversight, ensuring that such arrangements are proportionate, transparent, and limited to specified purposes.		The Bill does not introduce any new data sharing measures between public bodies. The relevant measures are already in place. Existing data sharing arrangements are governed by clear legislative provisions under the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005, as amended and the GDPR, and implemented through existing data governance arrangements within the Department.
18. The Committee recommends that the Public Services Card remain the property of the Minister at all times.		This item is addressed in section 8(e) of the Bill. Section 8(e) provides that a Public Services Card shall remain the property of the Minister at all times.
19. The Committee recommends that any statutory time limits for review requests are clearly set out in legislation, including defined provisions for extensions where appropriate.		This item was in the General Scheme and has been withdrawn from the Bill. The purpose of the Head in the General Scheme was to introduce a statutory two-year time limit for requesting a review by deciding officers, designated persons, appeals officers, or the chief appeals officer.

Commentary/recommendation as per Committee's PLS Report		Whether addressed (either in whole or in part) in the Bill – commentary from government department
		More time is necessary to fully consider the consequences of the amendment.
20. The Committee recommends that the application of time limits is supported by clear and accessible information on review and appeal rights, and by appropriate arrangements to assist individuals in engaging effectively with the process, taking account of potential practical barriers.		This item was in the General Scheme and has been withdrawn from the Bill. The purpose of the Head in the General Scheme was to introduce a statutory two-year time limit for requesting a review by deciding officers, designated persons, appeals officers, or the chief appeals officer. More time is necessary to fully consider the consequences of the amendment.
21. The Committee supports the proposed amendments to the Civil Registration Act 2004, including those facilitating registration and re-registration by designated state bodies in defined circumstances, and addressing specific situations such as cases involving children in State care, court orders, and the registration of births where a parent is deceased.		This item is addressed in Part 3 of the Bill. The General Register Office acknowledges the support of the Committee on these amendments and will work with the designated state bodies to ensure that the registration and re-registration of births of children in their care can be facilitated in circumstances where the parents of the child are not available to carry out this duty.
22. The Committee recommends that the implementation of these measures is supported by clear administrative arrangements and guidance, including provisions relating to online registration, the correction of records, and access to the register of lived identity, taking account of the technical nature of the amendments and the sensitive		This item lies outside the scope of the Bill. The General Register Office will work with the local registration office staff to provide clear guidance on the operation of the measures.

Commentary/recommendation as per Committee's PLS Report		Whether addressed (either in whole or in part) in the Bill – commentary from government department
circumstances to which they apply.		
23. The Committee supports the proposed amendment enabling a medical practitioner to authorise a person to notify the particulars of a death.	✓	This item is addressed in section 21 of the Bill. The General Register Office acknowledges the support of the Committee on this amendment and will work with medical practitioners, along with the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive, in implementing the measure when notification of deaths is commenced.
24. The Committee recommends the proposed technical amendments to the Charities Act 2009, including revisions relating to quorum requirements, the designation of a Deputy Chairperson, and clarification of procedural provisions for the Charity Appeals Tribunal.	✓	This item is addressed in section 26 of the Bill. While these amendments are wholly technical and operational in nature, they are essential in supporting the ongoing efficient operation of the Charity Appeals Tribunal and will align the operations of the Tribunal with standard practices across similar statutory bodies.

Source: L&RS and email communication from the Department of Social Protection to the L&RS, 18 September 2026. Note: The Department of Social Protection's responses to the recommendations of the Joint Committee's PLS report on the General Scheme of the Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill 2026 are reproduced verbatim above.

Legislative proposal

This section provides an overview of the legal effects of the various provisions of the Bill. As noted above the Bill seeks to amend the *Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005*, the *Civil Registration Act 2004*, and the *Charities Act 2009* respectively and does this across four Parts and in total 26 sections. In as far as possible, the section is structured in line with the parts of the Bill, which treat respectively the three Acts noted above.

Principal provisions of the Bill

Part 1: Preliminary and General

Sections 1 to 3

Part 1 contains three sections. Sections 1 and 2 are standard, technical provisions and provide for the title of the Bill and definitions related to the substantive sections that follow in Parts 2 to 4.

Section 3 seeks to repeal section 14 of the *Civil Registration (Electronic Registration) Act 2024*. Subsection 3(2) provides that section 1 (Schemes) of the above act will be repealed on commencement of section 21 (Notification of death and medical certification of cause of death) of the Bill.

Part 2: Amendments of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005

As the title suggests, Part 2 of the Bill provides for amendments to the Bill's Principal Act, the SWCA. Part 2 is comprised of 8 sections, 4 to 11.

Section 4(1) provides for the discontinuation in law of the Pre-retirement Allowance through its proposed repeal of Chapter 3 (Pre-retirement Allowance) under the Principal Act's Part 3 (Social Assistance). Section 4(2) provides for consequential amendments to the SWCA, which in the main relate to references in the SWCA to the Pre-retirement Allowance.

Section 5 seeks to amend sections 64 (Conditions for receipt) and 227 (interpretation), as well as Schedule 1 (Employments, excepted employments and excepted self-employed contributors) of the SWCA. The legal effect of this provision is to replace reference to *Regulation 41 or 42 of the Regulations of 2001* in the Principal Act with reference to *Income Tax (Employments) Regulations 2018 (S.I. No. 345 of 2018)* from.

Section 6 provides for amendments to section 68 (Disqualifications) of the SWCA. Section 68(6) as it stands provides for disqualification from receipt of Jobseeker's Benefit (a social insurance payment) for periods of up to 9 weeks where a person has lost employment through misconduct, voluntarily left, refuses an offer of, or has not sought, suitable employment or where aged under 55 years of age a person has been made redundant and has or is entitled to

receive a redundancy lump sum payment above a prescribed amount (€50,000).[71] Section 6(c) removes section 68(6)(e) which refers to redundancy payments. Section 6(d) also seeks to remove reference to "redundancy" in section 68(6)(d) in the case of not seeking a reasonable opportunity of employment. This amendment is reflects the introduction of the Jobseeker's Pay-Related Benefit from 31 March 2025 which in turn makes the parts of the section 68 unnecessary.[72] As a result of this proposed provision, according to the Department, this will required the deletion of article 50 of the Social Welfare (Consolidated Claims, Payments and Control) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 142 of 2007).[73]

Section 7 refers to bereaved partner's pension. Section 7 seeks to amend various sections of the Principal Act (SWCA). Reference to bereaved partner's pension was not included as a Head in the General Scheme of the Bill published in April 2025.[74] The Explanatory Memorandum accompanying the Bill states that the provision provides for a number of technical amendments on foot of the *Social Welfare (Bereaved Panter's Pension Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2025*. In the main these amendments seek to include specific reference to Bereaved Partner's (Contributory) Pension on foot of the above Act. Section 7 therefore seeks to make the relevant amendments to the following sections of the SWCA:

- Section 134 (Bereavement grants), in subsection 3
- Replace references to widow's (non-contributory) pension, a widower's (non-contributory) pension, a surviving civil partner's (non-contributory) pension

Section 8 seeks to amend section 263 (Public Services Card) of the Principal Act. Section 263, as amended, of the Principal Act provides for the PSC.[75] (Of note, section 263A provides for "Cancellation and surrender of the public services card" and section 263B provides for "Authentication of identity".) As it currently stands, section 263, subsection 1A provides for the following information to be "inscribed" on a PSC: name, PPSN, photograph, signature, issue number, expiry date and such information that may be prescribed by the Minister. Section 8(a) of the Bill seeks to amend section 263(1A) of the SWCA by providing for the inclusion of date of birth of a relevant person), where requested by that person under the proposed new subsection (1F) which is provided for by amendments proposed in section 8(b).

Section 8(b) proposes to insert after section 263(1C), new subsections 263(1D) to 263(1F). The effect of these is that a person, who has requested their date of birth to be inscribed on the PSC (1F), may use the PSC to provide information on their identify (1D), and their date of

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[71] For more on the tapered redundancy lump sum arrangements see https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/unemployed-people/jobseekers-benefit/

[72] Department of Social Protection, 2026, General Scheme of the Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill

[73] Ibid

[74] See Department of Social Protection, 2026, General Scheme of the Social Welfare and Other Matters Bill

[75] The amendments to the section are set out in the 'running' or current version of the SWCA and mainly come from Social Welfare and Pensions Acts 2010 and 2012.

birth (1E). Sections 8(c), 8(d) and 8(e) provide for the proper uses of a PSC and that is an offence to use the PSC in a manner outside of these proper uses.

Section 9 seeks to amend section 300A (Opinion of medical assessor) of the SWCA by replaces references to certain sections of the SWCA with a references to additional sections. The proposed amendments relate to decisions on determining entitlements to certain social welfare benefits. The statutory basis for social welfare deciding officers to seek a medical assessor's opinion is already provided for deciding officers (s. 300). Decisions. The effect of the proposed amendment by the inclusion of S. 311 extends this to appeals officers. Similarly the inclusion of ss. 317/18 extends this request for medical opinion to appeals officer and the Chief Appeals Officer (CAO) in respect of revised appeal decisions.

Section 10 seeks to amend section 318 (Revision by Chief Appeals Officer of decision of appeals officer) of the SWCA. Section 10 substitutes a new section for section 318. The effect of the proposed amendment is to provide that the CAO may affirm, or "by reason of some mistake having been made in relation to the law or the facts", annul decisions of appeal officers. It also provides that the Chief Appeals Officer annuls a decision in accordance with s. 1(c), the Chief Appeals Officer may "remit" a decision back to an appeals officer for their consideration. It should be noted the Explanatory Memorandum for the Bill states "in circumstances where remittal will resolve the matter faster overall " There is however no mention of time/speed in the Bill.

Section 11 substitutes a section for section 327 (Appeals to High Court) in the Principal Act. The effect of the proposed amendment is to allow an appeal to the High Court on a point of law from any decision of the CAO, as opposed to revised decision of the CAO, which is currently the case.

Part 3: Amendments of the Civil Registration Act 2004

As the title suggests, Part 3 of the Bill provides for amendments to the *Civil Registration Act 2004*. Part 3 is comprised of 13 sections, sections 12 to 25.

Section 12 defines act of 2004 as the Civil Registration Act 2004

Section 13 amends section 13 (Registers) of the Act by substituting a new paragraph (m) for the existing paragraph (m). The effect of this to establish a "register of lived identity" to be maintained by an tArd-Chláraitheoir.

Section 14 seeks to amend section 22 (Registration of father where parents not married) of the *Civil Registration Act 2004*. S. 14 of the Bill proposes to insert subsection (e) into s. 22(2) which provides for the Child and Family Agency (Tusla), under section 35 (Declaration of parentage) or section 45 (Finding of parentage as evidence in other proceedings) of the *Status of Children Act 1987*, to request on behalf of a child in its care a written declaration by the Registrar that a person is the father of a child. The legal effect of this is that Tusla can (re)register the birth of a child with the father's details on foot of a court order naming him as the father of the child.

Section 15 proposes to amend section 23A (Re-registration on foot of court order) of the Civil Registration Act 2004. Among other things, section 15(a) seeks to add subsection 1A after subsection 1. The effect of the proposed amendments to section 23A is to provide for the re-registration of a birth to include the name of a father where the child is in the care of Tusla, and where Tusla has been granted a court order naming the father of a child under section 35 of the Status of Children Act 1987.

Section 16 seeks to amend Section 30F (Definitions (*Part 3B*)). of the Civil Registration Act 2004. Among other things, the proposed amendment, provides for "register" to mean "the register of lived identity".

Section 17 (Error in relevant entry) provides for the substitution of the existing section 30H (Correction, cancellation or registration of entries in register of births) of the Civil Registration Act 2004 with a new section 30H. The legal effect of this provides for an tArd-Chláraitheoir to correct a factual or clerical error in an online registration where that error has been notified to an tArd-Chláraitheoir by any person including the staff of an tArd-Chláraitheoir. In so doing, tArd-Chláraitheoir must make all reasonable to notify in writing a person whose personal data would be affected.

The next section, **18**, substitutes the existing section 30I (Register under *Part 3B*) with a new section 30I (Register of lived identity) in the Civil Registration Act 2004. The legal effect of this proposed amendment is to establish the new name of the register (Register of lived identity) and provide that the register will be maintained by tArd-Chláraitheoir. In turn, **section 19** proposes to amend Section 30J (Index to register and privacy (*Part 3B*)) of the Act by adding subsections (aa) and (ab) after subsection (a). The effect of this amendment is set out who may apply to search the registry. Moreover, it provides an "affected person" or member of the public to make such an application to search the registry, where the person affected by the illegal birth registration gives their permission in writing. The following **section 20** in turn proposes to amend section 30K (Separate index of connections between register and register of births) of the Act with the effect that provision is made for the public inspection of the index linking the register of births and the register of lived identity, subject to receipt of written permission.

Section 21 amends section 42 (Certificate of cause of death) by substituting the current section 24 with a new section 42. If passed, this effect of this amendment will be to expand who can notify an tArd-Chláraitheoir of the death such that medical practitioners who attend a deceased person outside of a hospital or other institution may authorise a person to perform a medical practitioner's duty to notify the details of a death to an tArd-Chláraitheoir.

Section 22 and 23 are consequential technical amendments to those provided for in the Bill in respect of "register of lived identity" and factual/clerical errors in registration.

Section 24 amends section 73 (vital statistics) such, among things, the role of an tArd-Chláraitheoir in the collection, compilation, abstract and publication of vital statistics is updated to reflect current practices and collaboration with the Central Statistics Office.

Section 25 is a technical amendment to the First Schedule (Particulars to be entered in registers) of the Civil Registration Act 2004. The proposed amendment provides a legal basis so that the required particulars in respect of a birth and stillbirth can be registered online.

Part 4: Amendments of the Charities Act 2009

As the title suggests, Part 4 of the Bill provides for amendments to the *Charities Act 2009*. Part 4 is comprised of 1 section, section 26 of the Bill.

Section 26 proposes to amend the Charities Act 2006 in the following sections:

- In Part 2 (Charities Regulatory Authority), section 33 (Administrative cooperation on regulatory matters), by substitution the current subsection (6) with a new subsection (6).
- In Part 5 (Charity Appeals Tribunal), section 77 (Determination of appeals by Tribunal), by inserting after subsection (2), subsections (2A) and (2B), and after subsection (5), subsection (5A).

The effect of the amendments is, among other things:

- to update definitions,
- set the quorum for the Charity Appeals Tribunal to three members (inclusive of the chairperson);
- provision for a deputy chairperson to chair meetings of the Tribunal in the absence of the chairperson; and,
- immunity for Tribunal witnesses in respect of information disclosure or the provision of evidence.

Appendix

Table 11: Beneficiaries and expenditure across the main social welfare schemes 2024

Scheme	Beneficiaries	€ million	Expenditure % of this table
Pensions			
State Pension (Non-Contributory)	99,134	1,335.73	5.47%
State Pension (Contributory)	530,954	7,857.97	32.17%
Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension	126,640	1,954.30	8.00%
Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's Pension (Death Benefit)	697	11.48	0.05%
Working Age Income Supports			
Jobseeker's Allowance [1]	126,754	1,852.51	7.58%
One Parent Family Payment	43,859	752.84	3.08%
Basic Supplementary Welfare Allowance	11,073	127.91	0.52%
Farm Assist	3,610	52.05	0.21%
Jobseeker's Benefit	41,032	517.52	2.12%
Maternity Benefit	19,379	285.29	1.17%
Paternity Benefit	331	15.55	0.06%
Parent's Benefit	5,759	95.66	0.39%
Health and Safety Benefit	31	0.35	0.00%
Working Age Employment Supports			
Community Employment	19,463	369.22	1.51%
Rural Social Scheme	2,626	51.4	0.21%
Tús - Community Work Placement	4,574	84.39	0.35%
Job Initiative	286	9.75	0.04%
Back to Education Allowance	3,527	32.37	0.13%
Back to Work Enterprise Allowance	1,868	30.22	0.12%
Part-Time Job Incentive Scheme	71	0.7	0.00%
Illness, Disability, and Caring			
Blind Pension	921	13.47	0.06%
Carer's Allowance	97,985	1,202.53	4.92%
Disability Allowance	167,633	2,408.10	9.86%
Domiciliary Care Allowance	57,358	288.09	1.18%

Scheme	Beneficiaries	€ million	Expenditure % of this table
Disablement Benefit	14,301	75.49	0.31%
Carer's Benefit	4,107	63.79	0.26%
Illness Benefit	50,402	685.85	2.81%
Injury Benefit	560	7.05	0.03%
Invalidity Pension	55,697	852.44	3.49%
Carer's Support Grant	135,586	351.21	1.44%
Partial Capacity Benefit	2,945	25.93	0.11%
Child Related			
Child Benefit	676,916	2,555.12	10.46%
Working Family Payment	46,944	420.88	1.72%
Back to Work Family Dividend	2,108	9.56	0.04%
Guardian's Payment (Contributory)	1,328	21.2	0.09%
Guardian's Payment (Non-Contributory)	628	10.3	0.04%
Total	727,924	24,428.22	

Source: Department of Social Protection, Annual Report 2024; and, Department of Social Protection, Annual Statistics Report 2024.

Figure 2: PSC - Assessment of project plan against good practice business case

Good practice contents of business case	Issues covered in at least one document
Project specification	
Problem definition	●
Project objectives/scope	●
Key stakeholders	●
Assessment of organisation capacity to undertake project	○
Dependencies	◐
Procurement	●
Consequences of not proceeding with project/alternatives	●
Information security/data protection	●
Timeline and work plan	●
Risks	◐
Costs and resources	
Staff resources required to support project	◐
Projected costs	◐
Benefits	
Qualitative and quantitative benefits to the Department	●
Qualitative and quantitative benefits to the customer	●
Project governance and management	
Project structure	●
Project roles	●
Project initiation document	◐
Benefits realisation plan	○
Conclusions and recommendations	●

Source: Analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of the consultant study 2003, Memorandum to Government 2004, SAFE Business Requirements - 2005, Memorandum to Government 2005, DSP papers and correspondence to DPER in 2009 seeking sanction to proceed with the project and paper on deployment of PSC 2011.

Notes: ● - included
○ - not included
◐ - partially covered

Source: Comptroller and Auditor General, 2015

List of Public Bodies under Schedule 5 of the SWCA

The bodies listed in Schedule 5 of the SWCA for the purposes of the PSC are: (1) a Minister of the Government, the Commission for Public Service Appointments, the Public Appointments Service, the Revenue Commissioners; (2) a local authority (for the purposes of the Local

Government Act 2001); an education and training board, (3) the Health Service Executive; (4) a body established by the Minister for Education and Science under section 54 of the Education Act 1998, a payment service provider (within the meaning of section 122(1) of the Finance (Local Property Tax) Act 2012 in relation to the purpose specified in that section of that Act, a payment service provider, An Foras Áiseanna Saothair, An Garda Síochána and the Defence Forces in respect of their own members, An tArd Chláraitheoir, an tÚdáras un Ard-Oideachas, the Central Bank of Ireland, when carrying out its functions in relation to the Central Credit Register, An tÚdarás Náisiúnta um Uathrollú Coigiltis Scoir, Coillte Teoranta, Enterprise Ireland, Health and Social Care Professionals Council, National Educational Welfare Board, Quality and Qualifications Ireland, Registrar of Beneficial Ownership of Investment Limited Partnerships, Registrar of Beneficial Ownership of Irish Collective Asset management Vehicles, Credit Unions and Unit Trusts, Registrar of Beneficial Ownership of Common Contractual Funds, Registrar of Beneficial Ownership of Companies and Industrial and Provident Societies, Taighde Éireann, the Central Applications Office, the Central Statistics Office, the Commission for Taxi Regulation, the Companies Registration Office, the General Medical Services (Payments) Board, the Insolvency Service of Ireland, the Legal Aid Board, the Mental Health Commission, the National Breast Screening Board, the National Cancer Registry Board, the National Council for Special Education, the National Shared Services Office, the National Treasury Management Agency, the National University of Ireland, the Pensions Board, the Pensions Ombudsman, the Personal Injuries Assessment Board, the Private Residential Tenancies Board, the Pyrite Resolution Board, the Private Security Authority, the Probate Office, the Property Services Regulatory Authority, the Road Safety Authority, Sustainable Energy Ireland — The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, the Teaching Council; the Workplace Relations Commission; (5) the following Voluntary Hospitals: Beaumont Hospital, Dublin, Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital, Dublin, Coombe Women's Hospital, Dublin, Dublin Dental Hospital, Hume Street Hospital, Dublin, Incorporated Orthopaedic Hospital of Ireland, Clontarf, Dublin, Leopardstown Park Hospital, Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Dublin, Mercy Hospital, Cork, National Maternity Hospital, Dublin, National Rehabilitation Hospital, Dun Laoghaire, Our Lady's Hospice, Dublin, Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Crumlin, Dublin, Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital, Dublin, South Infirmary/Victoria Hospital, Cork, St. James's Hospital, Dublin, St. John's Hospital, Limerick, St. Luke's Hospital, Dublin, St. Mary's Hospital and Residential School, Baldoyle, Dublin, St. Michael's Hospital, Dun Laoghaire, St. Vincent's University Hospital, Elm Park, Dublin, St. Vincent's Hospital, Fairview, Dublin, The Adelaide and Meath Hospital, Dublin incorporating the National Children's Hospital, The Children's Hospital, Temple Street, Dublin, The Royal Hospital, Donnybrook, University Dental School and Hospital, Cork,

Source: https://revisedacts.lawreform.ie/eli/2005/act/26/revised/en/pdf?annotations=falseAppendix 2