

Further Information

If you are interested in participating on the Rural social scheme or you are a local community group looking for a participant Please contact one of the RSS supervisors

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www.welfare.ie



RURAL SOCIAL SCHEME

Information Pack



Rural Social Scheme

The Rural Social Scheme provides a supplementary income for low income farmers and fishermen & women who are unable to earn an adequate living. To qualify for the RSS you must be getting a social welfare payment. In return, people participating in the RSS provide services that benefit rural communities.

What Type of Work is carried out?

The type of work carried out by RSS participants includes:

- Maintaining and enhancing various walking routes (that is, waymarked ways, agreed walks) and bog roads
- Energy conservation work for older people and those at risk of poverty
- Village and countryside enhancement projects
- Social care and care of older people
- Community care for pre-school and after-school groups
- Environmental maintenance work - maintenance and caretaking of community and sporting facilities
- Projects relating to not-for-profit cultural and heritage centres
- Community administration or clerical work.

How many hours work is involved and how long does the scheme last?

You work 19.5 hours per week. These hours are based on a farmer friendly schedule. This is to ensure participation on the scheme does not affect a your farming activities. If you get a place on the Scheme, you are offered a contract from your start date up to the following 31 March. You may be considered for a further term following the initial contract, if you continue to meet all the criteria for the Scheme.

Westmeath Community Development decide on your application. While it is not intended that anyone would remain on the scheme permanently, there is no definite time limit for participation.

If you are eligible for the Scheme but don't wish to participate, your dependent spouse, civil partner or cohabitant may take the available place. However, this is only if neither of you are participating in any other similar scheme, (for example, the Community Employment Scheme.) The Rural Social Scheme operates independently of the Community Employment Scheme (CE).

Rules/Rates of Pay

To participate in the scheme you must be getting:

- Farm Assist Or
- If you are actively farming or fishing you may qualify for the scheme if you are also getting a qualifying social welfare payment.

In most cases your RSS rate of payment will be equivalent to your existing payment plus a €20 top-up.

If you were getting an age-related reduced rate of payment your payment is increased to the minimum weekly rate of €208.

Criteria for a farmer

You must provide proof that you are actively farming. To do this, you must provide a copy of your application for the EU Single Payment Scheme for the current year, including a valid herd number. If you are actively farming and have not applied for the EU Single Payment Scheme, you should contact Westmeath Community Development for advice.

Criteria for a child/sibling of a farmer

If you are a child/sibling of a herd number owner and you can certify that you are resident and/or working on the farm and you are getting one of the qualifying social welfare payments, you may be eligible to participate in the RSS on the basis of your parent's/sibling's herd number.

Criteria for a spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of a farmer

If you are eligible but do not wish to participate in the RSS, your dependent spouse, civil partner or cohabitant can take the available place.

Alternatively, if your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant is getting one of the qualifying social welfare payments and is actively farming, they can use your herd number to qualify for the scheme.

Your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant can participate in the RSS, if he/she is under 66 and you are getting a State Pension(Non-Contributory) which includes an Increase for Qualified Adult for him or her.

Contact RSS Supervisors for Further Information

044-9348571

