



**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta**
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Terms and Conditions for
grants for the improvement of a private water
supply to a house



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Grants payable under the Housing (Private Water Supply Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020 (S.I. No. 192 of 2020)

- Please read the following information notes before completing the application form.
- All questions on the form must be answered and, where specified, supporting documents must be provided. Incomplete forms or those which are not accompanied by the appropriate documents will not be processed.
- Work must NOT start before approval is provided in writing by the housing authority. If work has commenced before approval is received, your application will not be considered and payment will be refused.
- The grant scheme is administered by housing authorities. All matters relating to the day-to-day operation of the grant scheme, including applications and payments, are a matter for the relevant housing authority.
- Any enquiries about the grant should be addressed to the relevant housing authority's Rural Water Programme Liaison Officer.

1. Purpose of grant

The purpose of this grant scheme is to assist households in rural areas that are dependent on a private water supply (individual well) for their household use, by financially assisting them where they incur capital expenditure, to carry out improvements to the supply to ensure that the water supply is wholesome and clean, or that the quantity supplied is insufficient to meet the domestic needs of the household as defined in the Housing (Private Water Supply Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020 (S.I. No. 192 of 2020).

For grant purposes, a private water supply is defined as a system providing a supply of water to a single house by means of a source that is not common or shared.

This scheme forms part of the funding investment under Measure 8 of the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme (MARWP) 2019 to 2021.

The grant enables improvement works to be carried out to a private water supply (see Appendix I) so that it will provide water that is compliant with the quality standards of the Drinking Water Regulations¹ ("the Regulations") and/or will supply the sufficient quantity of water that meets the domestic needs of the household.

The grant is an integral part of improving the quality and reliability of private water supplies that are supplying water for domestic use by houses in rural areas.

¹ *The European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2014 (S.I. No. 122 of 2014) see at: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/si/122/made/en/print> and the European Union (Drinking Water) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 (S.I. No. 464/2017) see at: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2017/si/464/made/en/print?q=464/2017>*

Important: Houses with individual connections to a common source of supply using separate abstraction and distribution systems do not constitute a private water supply for the purposes of the grant. The grant must be used solely for the improvement of a private water supply to a house. No part of the grant payment may be used to cross subsidise other non-domestic use e.g. farming activity or other commercial use.

2. Level of grant

The level of a grant is determined by the type of improvement works being undertaken and shall not exceed the following amounts:

- (a) (i) 85% of the approved costs for rehabilitation works, subject to a maximum of €3,000;
or
(ii) 85% of the approved costs for the provision of a new well, subject to a maximum of €5,000 (where the housing authority agrees that this is the most appropriate solution);
- (b) 100% of the approved costs for works that, in the opinion of the housing authority, are necessary to treat the water to meet the water quality standards specified in the Regulations, subject to a maximum grant of €1,000. Examples of such treatments are filtration or Ultra Violet treatment.

An application can be submitted in respect any of the following:

- Grant aid solely for rehabilitation works at (a)(i) above;
or
Grant aid solely for the provision of a new well at (a)(ii) above;
or
Grant aid solely for treatment works at (b) above.
- Grant aid for rehabilitation works as per (a)(i) above plus treatment works as per (b) above.
- Grant aid for the provision of a new well as per (a)(ii) above plus treatment works as per (b) above.

The grant is not available for improvement works that cost less than €750, in total.

3. Eligibility

An applicant may be considered eligible for a grant if, in the opinion of the housing authority, the following criteria are met:

- (a) The improvement works will be carried out on a water supply to a house, where that water supply does not meet the quality standards in the Regulations or the quantity supplied is insufficient to meet the domestic needs of the household; and,
- (b) The house is occupied by the applicant as his or her normal place of residence; and,

- (c) The house is not connected to, and cannot reasonably be connected to, Irish Water or a Group Water Scheme²; and,
- (d) The house is not located in an area that is, or is about to be, served by Irish Water or a Group Water Scheme; and,
- (e) The house has been fully constructed for more than seven years, and a grant has not been paid for the provision of, or improvement to, a water supply to the house under the scheme within the previous seven years. This includes grant aid in relation to treatment works.

Note: For the purposes of this grant scheme a normal place of residence includes long-term rentals but excludes private holiday homes and properties operated on a commercial basis (e.g. short-term rentals, self-catering properties, caravans/mobile homes, caravan/mobile home sites etc.). Properties owned by local authorities, housing associations, Health Services Executive etc. are not eligible.

Additional eligibility information:

- Applicants cannot avail of both grant amounts at Section 2(a) above i.e. they cannot avail of €3,000 for well rehabilitation plus the €5,000 for a new well. For further clarification see Section 2 above.
- The qualifying age of a house for a grant is seven years, and the period before a subsequent application can be made remains at seven years. This refers to grant aid in respect of improvement works, and includes treatment works.
- In exceptional circumstances, applicants may be permitted to make a second application within the seven-year period if the maximum grant was not fully utilised and some significant unforeseen or emergency issue arises after the first application. Examples of such circumstances would include contamination of the water supply, subsidence, deterioration caused by weather events.
- Applicants will be required to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the housing authority, that an unforeseen or emergency issue has arisen in their case.
- Where a second application is made within the seven-year period under these circumstances, the combination of the original payment and the second payment shall not exceed the maximum amount ordinarily payable, which is €3,000 in the case of a well rehabilitation or €5,000 in the case of a new well.
Example: In the case of a well rehabilitation, if €1,500 grant aid was paid in relation to the first application, and if further emergency rehabilitation works arise, the maximum additional payment that could be made within the seven-year period would be €1,500.

4. Approved cost

The housing authority determines the approved cost for each grant. It is an estimate of the reasonable cost of the qualifying works (see Appendix II).

² For the purposes of these Terms and Conditions, a Group Water Scheme means a scheme providing a private supply of water to two or more houses by means of a common or shared source of supply and distribution system.

Applicants must obtain three quotes for all proposed improvement works and submit copies of the quotes with the grant application. This includes proposed treatment works.

5. Receipts

Each claim for grant aid must be accompanied by receipts from each contractor engaged for the purpose of stated works. Receipts must include details of the works carried out and the associated costs.

6. Tax clearance requirements

In the case of each contractor engaged to carry out improvement works to a private water supply, a copy of a current tax clearance certificate issued to the contractor by the Revenue Commissioners must be submitted.

7. Processing of applications for grant aid

The following procedure will apply to the processing of all applications:

- (a) Applications for approval of grant aid should be submitted on *Form PWS 1a* (attached), to the housing authority in whose functional area the house served by the private water supply, the subject of the application, is located.
- (b) The private water supply that is the subject of the application will then be inspected by the housing authority or its representative to confirm the validity of the application with regard to the scope of works proposed. The pre-works inspection will:
 - establish that the existing water supply is not wholesome and clean or that the quantity of water supplied is insufficient to meet the domestic needs of the household; and,
 - determine whether the proposed works qualify for grant funding and are the most appropriate to address the particular issues; and
 - give advice to the applicant on how to generally and specifically improve and secure the integrity of their private water supply.
- (c) The housing authority will subsequently advise the applicant in writing (or via email) if the application is deemed eligible (subject to terms and conditions) or ineligible.
- (d) The applicant may then proceed with the required improvement works (see Appendix II) however, only works that are included in the application and deemed eligible will receive payment of grant aid.
- (e) Applications will be processed as quickly as possible.
- (f) If assistance in completing the form is required, please contact the relevant housing authority.
- (g) The housing authority reserves the right to make any enquiries it considers necessary, to verify information or supporting documentation provided as part of an application for grant aid, and may exclude from consideration for grant aid any applicant who supplies false or misleading information or documents.

8. Processing of claims for payment

The following procedure will apply to the processing of all claims for payment:

- (a) Once the works have been completed, claims for payment should be submitted on *Form PWS 1b* (attached), to the housing authority whose

functional area the house served by the private water supply, the subject of the application, is located.

- (b) *Form PWS 1b* must be accompanied by all receipts from each contractor engaged for the purpose of the improvement works.
- (c) The housing authority will carry out a post-works inspection of the improvement works to establish that:
 - the approved works have been satisfactorily undertaken and completed; and
 - a water supply which is satisfactory in both quality and quantity has been provided.
- (d) Once the housing authority has established that the improvement works have been completed to its satisfaction, the claim for payment shall then be processed.
- (e) Where the housing authority is of the opinion that the improvement works have not been undertaken in accordance with the application, or have not been satisfactorily completed, it may:
 - determine a revised approved cost, or
 - withhold payment of the grant until the applicant carries out such alterations to the existing works or such additional works as may be notified by the housing authority.
- (f) Where the housing authority is of the opinion that the actual cost of the qualifying works is less than the approved cost, a revised approved cost will be determined.
- (g) Claims will be processed as quickly as possible.
- (h) If assistance in completing the form is required, please contact the relevant housing authority.
- (i) The housing authority reserves the right to make any enquiries it considers necessary, to verify information or supporting documents provided as part of a claim for grant aid, and may exclude from consideration for grant aid any claimant who supplies false or misleading information or documents.

9. Appeals process

In processing applications under this grant scheme, it is recognised that some applicants may be dissatisfied with the housing authority's decision. Housing authorities will give every applicant an appeal mechanism allowing them to have the decision in their case reviewed by a housing authority official who did not deal with their original application.

The following procedure shall apply to each appeal:

- (a) The dissatisfied applicant is invited to submit a **written appeal** (this may be via email) on any decision notified to them by the housing authority on their application.
- (b) The appeal must be received by the housing authority **within three weeks** of the date of the decision and must state the reasons for the appeal.
- (c) The appeal will be considered by the housing authority and adjudicated upon within four weeks of receipt.
- (d) A decision on the appeal will be notified in writing to the appellant within two weeks of the decision being made.

APPENDIX I

1. Information on carrying out of improvement works

After the applicant receives approval in writing from the housing authority, the improvement works may commence.

Testing, sampling, analysis and certification of the water supply is an essential part of verification of the improvement works. This testing, sampling, analysis and certification is necessary to verify that the serious deficiency has been resolved to the satisfaction of the housing authority.

The necessary testing, sampling, analysis and certification varies depending on the improvement works carried out and is as follows:

(a) Improvement works consisting of the installation of water treatment equipment:

- Pre-installation - Sampling, analysis and certification of the water must be carried out to provide information on the equipment likely to be required.
- Post-installation – Sampling, analysis and certification of the water must be repeated in order to validate the water quality.

(b) Improvement works consisting of the drilling a new well or rehabilitating of an existing well:

- Pre-installation – once water is found, testing must be carried out by the well driller to validate the adequacy, for domestic purposes, of the water quantity available from the well. Sampling, analysis and certification of the water must be carried out to provide information on the treatment equipment likely to be required.
- Post-installation – Sampling, analysis and certification of the treated water must be carried out to validate the water quality.

(c) Improvement works consisting of the drilling of a new well or rehabilitating an existing well and the installation of water treatment equipment:

- Pre-installation (drilling of a new well only) – testing must be carried out by the well driller to validate the adequacy, for domestic purposes, of the water quantity available from the well.
- Pre-installation (both new well or rehabilitation of existing well) – Sampling, analysis and certification of the water must be carried out to provide information on the water treatment equipment likely to be required.
- Post-installation (both new well or rehabilitation of existing well) – Sampling, analysis and certification of the treated water must be carried out to validate the water quality as set out at (a) and (b) above.

Water Quality: Sampling and analysis is carried out to ensure that the water supply is fit for human consumption i.e. complies with water quality standards set out in the Regulations. The housing authority, based on its knowledge of the area of the water supply, will provide the applicant with a list of parameters (called bacteriological and

APPENDIX I

chemical check parameters) appropriate to local conditions for which the water must be analysed.

Sampling, analysis and certification must be carried out by a competent, recognised, independent and INAB (Irish National Accreditation Board) or equivalent accredited laboratory³. Analysis by non-accredited bodies will not be accepted.

The applicant is responsible for arranging sampling by the laboratory (the laboratory must take the water sample, not the applicant, as specific equipment and methods are used including sampling bottles, which have to be sterile).

In some parts of the country the housing authority or the HSE may be able to provide a sampling, analysis and certification service.

To validate water quality separate sets of sampling, analysis and certification are required:

Pre-treatment equipment (where being installed): The results from this sampling, analysis and certification of the raw water will guide the equipment providers on the appropriate water treatment equipment to install,

Post treatment equipment: The results from this sampling, analysis and certification of the treated water will verify the effectiveness of the installed water treatment equipment. It is advisable to use the water treatment system for a minimum period of two weeks prior to having the water tested.

Where the improvement works only involve works consisting of a drilling a new well or rehabilitating an existing well, and water treatment equipment is already in place, then normally only the sampling, analysis and certification of the treated water is required.

The housing authority will not pay a grant unless results to their satisfaction are obtained from the sampling, analysis and certification process. The housing authority will require that repeat sampling, analysis and certification, and if necessary further improvement work is carried out, until results to their satisfaction are obtained.

The applicant must retain a copy of the Certificate of Analysis issued by the laboratory and return it to the housing authority with the claim for payment of the grant. The housing authority will not pay a grant unless a Certificate of Analysis to their satisfaction is provided.

Water Quantity: Where the improvement works consist of drilling a new well or rehabilitating an existing well then once water is found tests must be carried out to validate water quality. The water quality analysis requirements apply, as set out above.

³ For some further guidance see at: <http://www.epa.ie/water/dw/hhinfo/testtreat/>

APPENDIX I

Water quantity is validated by the drilling contractor. The contractor must provide a signed Certificate of Water Quantity giving details of the borehole together with its estimated water production quantity based on a pumping test.

The necessary form, Certificate of Water Quantity, is available from the housing authority and should be provided with the written approval of the grant application.

The applicant must retain a copy of the Certificate of Water Quantity issued by the well driller and return it to the housing authority with the claim for payment of the grant. The housing authority will not pay a grant unless a Certificate of Water Quantity to their satisfaction is provided.

Where the improvement works involve drilling a new well and installing a pump, it is advisable to have the installation disinfected and to use the treatment for a minimum period of two weeks prior to having the water tested.

2. Information on a wholesome and clean water supply

A water supply may be regarded as not meeting the required standards for water quality as defined in the Regulations if the housing authority is satisfied that the water supply is in need of upgrading or replacement as it is not wholesome and clean⁴ or where the quantity is insufficient to meet the water demand for domestic purposes of the house.

A water supply depending on a rainwater tank may be regarded, for grant purposes, as not being wholesome and clean, or supplying insufficient quantity to meet the water demand for domestic purposes of the house. However, a water supply should not be regarded as supplying insufficient quantity merely because the demand for water for non-domestic purposes from the source concerned has increased.

Water 'Hardness' is a natural characteristic of much of Ireland's drinking water supply that does not cause quality deficiencies in the supply. Hard water is not regarded as meeting the stated criteria for grant purposes. Therefore, the installation of a water softener is not covered by the grant scheme. Similarly, systems installed to remove sodium, in water that has been softened, are not covered by the grant scheme.

⁴ "wholesome and clean" in relation to a water supply has the same meaning as in the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 122 of 2014), as amended.

Information on qualifying works

Works qualify for funding under the grant scheme where they are undertaken to improve a supply of domestic water in a house and they consist of one or more of the following:

- drilling or commissioning a new well,
- rehabilitating an existing well, including deepening or relining an existing bore and the removal of silt,
- providing or upgrading a supply of water from a surface water source,
- the construction or improvement of a pump house, piping or other facilities in connection with the supply of water,
- the provision or improvement of mechanical or electrical equipment or facilities in connection with the supply of water,
- the provision or improvement of facilities or equipment for the treatment of water, or,
- sampling, analysis and certification of the water supply (pre and post the works) to verify that the supply to the house at the kitchen tap is compliant with the Regulations.

Works do not qualify where, in the opinion of the housing authority, they:

- exceed that required to secure an adequate supply of water for domestic purposes (e.g. treatment in excess of that required to satisfy the wholesome and clean requirement is being proposed)⁵,
- relate to the installation or improvement of plumbing inside a house,
- relate to the provision or up-grading of a supply of water for non-domestic purposes (i.e. for some commercial activity where the improved supply will be used for both domestic and some commercial activity e.g. farm, business operated from home, etc.)^{5 above5},
- have commenced before an on-site pre-works assessment visit and written approval has been issued to the applicant by the housing authority,
- are for water softeners or related treatment.

⁵ In such circumstances the housing authority may determine an approved cost that reflects the cost of the domestic element of the overall proposed works.