



Circular L4/20 (V2)

4th June 2020

**To each Director of Services (Water Services)
To each Rural Water Liaison Officer**

Grants for the improvement of a private water supply to a house

You are advised that under the ***Housing (Private Water Supply Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020 (S.I. No. 192 of 2020)***, the existing grant scheme to support improvement works for a private water supply providing water intended for human consumption and domestic purposes to a house, (more commonly known as private or household wells) has been revised.

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

The scheme does not apply to houses where a public (Irish Water) or Group Water Scheme has already been, or can reasonably be, provided. In the case of houses where a group scheme water supply has already been, or can reasonably be provided, the grant and subsidy schemes applicable to group water schemes would be relevant.

The new grant scheme replaces the scheme (the “previous scheme”) introduced under Circular L8/97 (30 April 1997). The new grant scheme is now in operation and applications can be made from the date of this Circular based on the *Terms and Conditions for grants for the improvement of a private water supply to a house*.

Background and Objectives

The objective of the grant scheme for a private water supply to a house is to assist households dependent on these supplies where capital expenditure is incurred in order to remedy supplies that are not wholesome and clean¹, or where the quantity of water supplied is insufficient to meet 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. Significantly, the scheme contributes to public health across Ireland through improved drinking water quality in these supplies. The improved grant structure will assist in

¹ “wholesome and clean” in relation to a water supply has the same meaning as that set out in the Regulation 4 of The European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2014 (S.I. No. 122 of 2014) as amended: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/si/122/made/en/print>



meeting the requirements of the Drinking Water Directive² in relation to rural water supplies.

The new grant is designed to facilitate the provision of a potable water supply for rural households that cannot connect to a mains supply. The grant will ease the costs of water delivery in these areas, by providing access to a reliable, clean and safe source of drinking water.

Proposed approach

With regards to private water supply systems, the housing authority shall:

- Raise awareness of such systems and the problems that can arise where the water supply is not wholesome and clean or the quantity of water supplied is insufficient to meet the domestic needs of the household; and
- Promote the availability and uptake of the new grant scheme in its administrative area.

Participation in the new scheme is voluntary and is therefore at the discretion of potential applicants.

Grant application, approval and payment process

The following process applies in relation to grant applications:

1. The potential applicant submits a completed application form (Form PWS 1a) to the relevant housing authority.
2. 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:
 - (i) establish that the existing supply is not wholesome and clean and/or is insufficient to meet the domestic needs of the household, and determine its eligibility for grant funding; and
 - (ii) determine whether the proposed works qualify for grant funding and are the most appropriate to address the particular issues; and
 - (iii) give advice to the applicant on how to generally and specifically improve and secure the integrity of their private water supply.

It may not be possible in all cases for an application to provide full details of the proposed works at the time of the application (for example: in the case of a proposal to drill a new well, it would not be possible to predict the exact location or depth of the well). In such cases, an initial examination of the application should be directed at determining if the applicant is eligible for a grant but will not make any decision on the eligibility of any future works.

When the applicant who has been deemed eligible for a grant, provides full details of the proposed works, the housing authority will then carry out a pre-

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31998L0083&from=EN>



- works inspection to consider whether the relevant works qualify, and determine an approved cost and amount of grant.
3. 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. A template is attached for your convenience. You should not edit this document other than to include your housing authority's logo/branding.
 4. The applicant may proceed with the required works however only works that are included in applications deemed eligible will receive payment of grant aid.
 5. Once the works have been completed, the applicant should submit a completed claim form (Form PWS 1B) and all receipts from each contractor engaged for the purpose of the remediation works to the housing authority, in order to claim payment.
 6. 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.
 7. In cases where the works have been satisfactorily completed in accordance with the detailed proposal submitted and they comply with all other terms and conditions, the housing authority will issue a letter to the applicant advising that payment will be made as soon as possible.
 8. In cases where the works have not been satisfactorily completed in accordance with the detailed proposal submitted or they do not comply with all other terms and conditions, the housing authority will issue a letter to the applicant advising that the application is ineligible or partially ineligible, noting the relevant reasons.
 9. The housing authority will recoup the cost of the grants paid, from the Department in accordance with a timeline to be agreed with the Department. (Form PWS 1 and PWS 1 Schedule).

Appeals process

In administering this grant scheme, it is recognised that some applicants may be dissatisfied with housing authority decisions. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The appeal will be considered by the housing authority and adjudicated upon within four weeks of receipt.



4. A decision on the appeal will be notified in writing to the appellant within two weeks of the decision being made.

Transition between existing and new arrangements

Applications approved, and where work has already started, under the previous circular should be concluded under the arrangements of that circular.

The Department has no objection to applicants who have submitted an application under the previous scheme that has not yet been processed and where no works have started, withdrawing that application and submitting an application under the new arrangements, provided that all eligibility criteria are met.

Operation of the scheme

When a housing authority pays a grant under the scheme:

- The Department will reimburse 100% of the amount paid by the housing authority.
- All requests for refunds of grants paid should be submitted to the Department's Rural Water Unit, Government Offices, Ballina, Co. Mayo, F12 E8N6, rural.water@housing.gov.ie.

Monitoring and oversight

The Department will monitor the expenditure under the scheme on an ongoing basis, to ensure alignment with the scheme allocation.

- The housing authority will ensure that its systems are set up in a format that facilitates the extraction of information on claims at all stages e.g. new claims, approved claims, payment pending, etc.
- The housing authority will provide any information, reports, etc. relating to expenditure in a timely manner, including material for inclusion in Ministerial briefings or Parliamentary Questions.
- All payments will be subject to audit by the Department, and it is envisaged that a maximum of 10% of payments would be audited in any one calendar year. Full and accurate documentation to support all expenditure should be maintained, and accessible for audit purposes at all times, and for a period of four years from the end of the MARWP 2019-2021 cycle.

The Department may from time to time issue guidelines to housing authorities in relation to the operation of the grant scheme.

The documents which are to be used by housing authorities when requesting refunds of grants from the Department's Rural Water unit are attached (Form PWS 1 and PWS 1 Schedule). Also included with this letter is the Terms and Conditions note for applicants (including the application form [Form PWS 1a] and payment claim form [Form PWS 1b]).



A copy of the Housing (Private Water Supply Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020 (S. I. No. 192 of 2020), which includes details of the eligibility criteria and the level of grants available, and the supporting documents required for each application, is issued with this Circular.

The electronic versions of the various documentation allow for the insertion of housing authority details and logos – they should not be otherwise modified. Housing authorities are asked to place the material issued under this Circular on the Water Services section of their Website with appropriate links for ease of access by potential applicants.

The Department will arrange a workshop for housing authorities on the new scheme in the near future.

The Department will arrange a workshop for housing authorities on the revised scheme in the near future, this is likely to be a web-based event given the current restrictions due to the global crisis. The Department will undertake a review of the grant scheme after one year of operation to ensure its alignment with policy objectives.

Any queries on this circular should be sent to rural.water@housing.gov.ie .

Yours sincerely,

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FORM PWS 1

**Application to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
for refund of grants paid by housing authorities for the carrying out of
improvement works of a private water supply to a house where the housing
authority has confirmed eligibility to apply for a grant.**

Housing authority:

1. I hereby certify that the grant payments set out in the attached schedule have been made by this housing authority to persons in respect of the private water supplies listed in the schedule and that such payments are in compliance with the *Housing (Private Water Supply Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020 (S.I. No. 192 of 2020)* and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government's Circular L4/20 4th June 2020.
2. I hereby claim recoupment of € , being the total of the grant payments made by the above named housing authority to persons in respect of the private water supplies listed in the attached schedule.
3. I hereby certify that none of the grant payments as set out in the attached schedule have previously been claimed from the Department.

Prepared by: _____ (Signature)
_____ (Name in BLOCK)

Date: _____

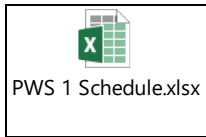
Certified by*: _____ (Signature)
_____ (Name in BLOCK)

Date: _____

* *Director of Services or equivalent*

PWS 1 Schedule

The schedule can be found in the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, attached below.



This Schedule should be completed by the housing authority and submitted with FORM PWS 1 to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

Housing authority confirmation of approval of grant aid for the carrying out of improvement works to a private water supply.

Reference No: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Eircode: _____

Housing Authority: _____

The quality of the water supply at the above address has been deemed as not being wholesome and clean, or the quantity of water supplied is insufficient to meet the domestic needs of the household, as defined in the Housing (Private Water Supply Financial Assistance) Regulations 2020 (Statutory Instrument No. 192 of 2020).

This opinion is based on an assessment (including a site visit) of this property to establish the condition of the water supply and to verify that it does not meet the quality standards of the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations, 2014 as amended by the European Union (Drinking Water) (Amendment) Regulations, 2017, or the quantity of water supplied is insufficient to meet the domestic needs of the household.

You have been approved for a grant to carry out improvement works to the water supply at the above address, details of eligible works to be undertaken and grant approval amount are attached.

Signed: _____

[XXXXXX] County Council

[Address line 1]

[Address line 2]

[Address line 3]

[Eircode]

Date: _____