

The AHCPS & VOA Income Continuance Plan

Plan summary



Perhaps the greatest threat to your livelihood is ill health

At the 2014 Plan review, both the AHCPs and the VOA decided to combine their Income Continuance Plans. There is now one Plan available and it is called the AHCPs & VOA Income Continuance Plan. The main reason for this decision was to increase the group purchasing power of the two Associations, to reduce the cost for members.

The Plan has also made provision for the new Public Sector sick pay arrangements. This is an extremely important benefit for Plan members, and a great deal of work was done to ensure that this great benefit was secured.

The AHCPs and VOA Income Continuance Plan, administered by Cornmarket, provides members with the financial security they deserve. The security and benefits of the Plan are not available anywhere else, that's why over 1,900 members* already enjoy the vital protection that it provides.

The Plan has grown to become an important benefit of union membership, and it is well placed to provide vital protection for members, at an affordable cost, for many years to come.

Almost everything in your life depends on your income. Please don't risk your future financial security. If you haven't already joined the Plan, I would urge you to do so now.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ivan Ahern".

Ivan Ahern
Director,
Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd.

*Cornmarket, August, 2014.

Cornmarket's role as administrators

Cornmarket – working for you

Cornmarket has been administering both the AHCPs & the VOA Income Continuance Plans since 2000. The Plan aims to provide a realistic level of income in the event of loss of salary due to disability arising from illness or injury.

Our role includes:

1. Negotiating with the insurers (currently New Ireland) to obtain the most competitive rates and to secure the best possible benefits.
2. Assisting AHCPs & VOA members who wish to make a claim from the Plan, by guiding them through every stage of the claims process and acting as the members' advocate.
3. Promoting the Plan to AHCPs & VOA members.



A Claims Service you can trust

Cornmarket has its own dedicated, in-house Income Continuance Claims Team. The team members are specialised, well-informed and easy to talk to, and will do all they can to help in a member's time of need.

They provide a vital 'hand-holding' function from start to finish of the claims process. So should you need to make a claim, you can rest assured that it will be dealt with in the efficient, professional and sensitive manner that you deserve.

The Plan in action

Through its various Income Continuance Plans, Cornmarket has helped protect the financial security of more Public Sector employees than any other company in Ireland. But the real testament to the quality of these Plans is the amount being paid out to beneficiaries, which is now counted in hundreds of millions of Euro. Here's what just two of the people who have benefited from our Income Continuance Plans have to say.

"I wouldn't have any hope for the future."

Margaret Carolan,
Plan Beneficiary,
Co. Wicklow.

"It's bad enough having to give up your work through illness. Just think what your life would be like if there was no salary coming through that door. If I hadn't got the money coming into me every month, I wouldn't be able to pay the mortgage, I wouldn't have the car that I need, I wouldn't be able to finance my kids doing what they're doing at the moment, I wouldn't have any holidays. I wouldn't have any hope for the future."

"After 23 years of never being sick, never missing a day in school"

Seamus McAteer,
Plan Beneficiary,
Co. Meath.

"After 23 years of never being sick, never missing a day in school, I had a stroke with various complications and I was forced to stop teaching. Because I was in the Plan it meant that what would have become a luxury, wasn't. When the bill came in for Euro Languages Colleges for my daughter or for my son's halls of residence at DCU, I could just write the cheque. We didn't have to worry about it. If I hadn't gotten this, then I'd have had to borrow from the Credit Union or find the money some other way."

Why you need the Income Continuance Plan

Although many members feel that they will never need the protection that the Plan provides, sadly our experience has been that even the healthiest person can suffer unexpected illness or have a serious accident.

What is more, the changes to Public Sector Sick Leave arrangements which came into effect on 31st March 2014 mean a dramatic drop in your paid sick leave. Since the changes have been implemented, members without Income Continuance face greater financial uncertainty should they fall ill as they will be taken off the payroll sooner than before. Thankfully, the Plan has made provision for these changes and will pay out Plan benefits earlier than before, in line with members' needs. The Plan provides essential protection for all members and membership has never been more vital.

What happens to your income if you fall ill under the new sick leave arrangements?

Standard Sick Leave

Under Public Sector sick leave arrangements introduced in 2014, typically you have access to paid sick leave of 13 weeks (92 days) at full pay in one year, followed by 13 weeks (91 days) at half pay. This is subject to a maximum of 26 weeks (183 days) in a rolling 4 year period. If you exceed 183 days paid sick leave you may receive Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration for a further 18 months (548 days), subject to the terms of the Public Sector sick leave arrangements.

Extended Sick Leave for Critical Illness*

Under the Public Sector sick leave arrangements, there is a Critical Illness Protocol whereby employees may be granted extended paid sick leave of 26 weeks (183 days) at full pay in one year, followed by 26 weeks (182 days) at half pay, subject to a maximum of 52 weeks (365 days) in a rolling 4 year period.

If you exceed 365 days paid sick leave, you may receive Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration for a further 12 months (365 days). Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration may be extended for a further period up to a maximum of 2 years (730 days).

Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration

Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration (formerly referred to as Pension Rate of Pay) is based on your accrued pension benefits that would have applied had you actually retired on ill health grounds. It may be granted where there is a realistic prospect of an individual returning to work. However, any added years arising from purchase of service arrangements are not taken into account, as no retirement has actually taken place.

* There are certain criteria used to determine whether an illness qualifies for extended paid sick leave.

Ill Health Early Retirement Pension

Alternatively, if you retire on the grounds of ill health you may be entitled to an Early Retirement Pension. Even if you have many years of service, your Ill Health Early Retirement Pension will only be a fraction of your salary. In addition, those paying PRSI at the 'A' rate may be entitled to a State Illness Benefit, but at just €9,776 p.a. (2014 level), the State Illness Benefit provides a small income only.

The reality is that long-term illness inevitably means a severe drop in living standards. The need for some kind of additional income is vital.

How the Plan works – Disability Benefit

Once your salary has reduced to half pay or Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration is being paid, if you are disabled due to illness or injury, the Plan aims to pay you an income of up to 75% of your salary less any other income (e.g. half pay, Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration, Early Retirement Pension, State Illness Benefit) to which you may be entitled.

The Plan goes on paying you until you recover, are deemed fit to return to work by New Ireland, die, or right up to your 65th birthday, if you are permanently disabled.

Membership of the
Plan is more vital
than ever.

If a member making a claim decides not to apply for Early Retirement Pension (perhaps because he/she intends to return to work) and New Ireland agrees that there is a reasonable expectation of returning to work, then New Ireland may pay a benefit of 75% of salary less any State Illness Benefit/ Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration for a maximum of 2 years. This means no deduction will be made from the benefit paid under the Plan for an amount equivalent to Early Retirement Pension, as no Early Retirement Pension is being claimed. If a member retires subsequently and an Early Retirement Pension is paid, the additional amount that was paid under the Plan since the effective date of early retirement must naturally be repaid to the insurer.

Important

You must remain a member of the AHCPS or VOA to remain an eligible member of the Plan. If you leave your union you must inform Cornmarket in writing, as you can no longer stay in the Plan, and you will not be able to claim from it.

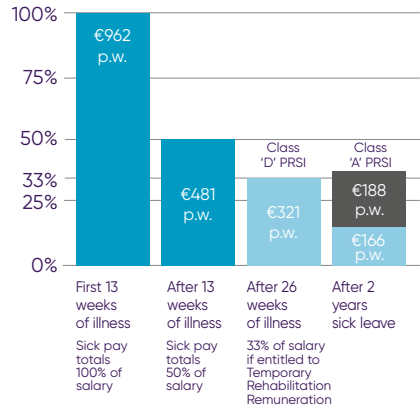
Example of how the Plan works

The example below is based on a Public Sector employee, who is a member of the Superannuation Scheme with 20 years' service earning €50,000 per annum, who is now unable to work due to disability arising from illness or injury.

It is assumed that standard Public Sector sick leave arrangements apply (i.e. 13 weeks full pay in one year, followed by 13 weeks half pay), extended paid sick leave under the Critical Illness Protocol does not apply and Ill Health Early Retirement Pension is granted after 2 years.

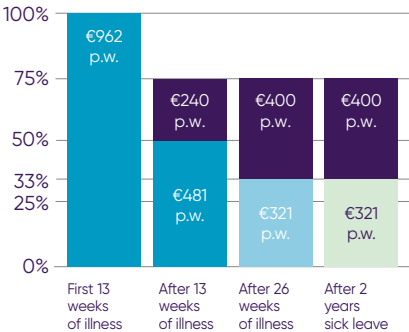
An example of what happens when sick pay runs out

Staff recruited to the Public Service on or after 6th April 1995 pay class A PRSI. Their Superannuation Plan pension is integrated to take account of the value of the Contributory State Pension in calculating the pension payable. In the event of illness, they may typically claim State Illness Benefit.

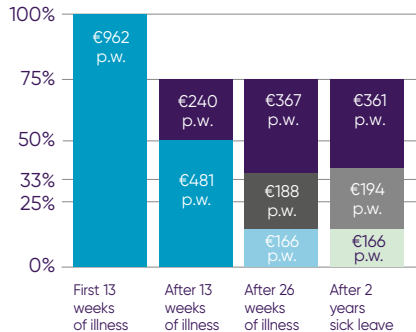


Examples of how the Plan works

D Rate PRSI Example



A Rate PRSI Example



- Plan Benefits
- Sick Pay
- Temporary Rehabilitation Remuneration
- State Illness Benefit
- Early Retirement Pension
- State Invalidation Pension

Additional protection for you and your family

Should you die, the issue of day-to-day living expenses, credit card bills, loans, etc. will still have to be met by those you have left behind. Members will benefit from Death Benefit in the form of:

1. An extra three months' benefit paid after the death of a claimant

If you are a claimant and in receipt of benefit from the Plan at the date of your death, the Plan will provide a Death Benefit in the form of an extra three months' benefit paid to your estate after you die. This benefit can mean essential financial support for your loved ones at what is already a difficult time.

2. Accidental Death Benefit

In the event of accidental death, a benefit of €15,000 is payable to your estate. Accidental Death means death resulting from an injury caused by accidental, violent, external and visible means and is in no way linked to sickness, disease or physical disorder of the Life Insured.

3. Children's Death Benefit

A death benefit of €4,000 is payable on the death of a member's child. Children's Death Benefit applies to all the natural or legally adopted children of the member who are aged between 0 months and 18 years at the date the benefit is payable and between 18-21 years for those who are in full-time education. Unless a child has been legally adopted, the name of the member must appear as a parent on the child's birth certificate.

Please contact Cornmarket for terms and conditions and general exclusions.



Affordable for every member

How much does the Plan cost?

As membership is so vital, the Plan is designed to be affordable for every member. It is remarkably good value because it's negotiated on a special 'group basis' for AHCPs & VOA members. The contribution rate is currently set at 0.60% of gross salary and, for most members, is conveniently deducted from your salary by your employer. Please bear in mind that it is your responsibility to ensure that the correct deductions have, in fact, been made by your employer and that deductions are cancelled where appropriate.

A helping hand from Revenue

You are eligible for tax relief at your highest rate of tax on your contribution. This means that for most members, the cost of membership is between €4 to €6 a week after tax – a small price to pay for peace of mind.

Example

Income	Weekly (gross)	Weekly (net)
€60,000	€6.90	€4.14
€70,000	€8.05	€4.83
€80,000	€9.20	€5.52

Real contribution rate of 0.36%, paying income tax @ 40% as of 01/01/2015.

Please note: This rate (based on the benefits in place at the 2014 review) is guaranteed until the next Plan review on 1st October 2019.

How to join the Plan

Who is eligible to join?

You may apply to join the Plan if you are:

1. A member of the Association of Higher Civil & Public Servants (AHCPS) or the Veterinary Officers' Association (VOA)
2. Under age 65
3. Actively at work*
4. Working for 9 hours or more per week

and either

5. Employed on a permanent full-time basis **or**
 - Commenced a contract of definite duration (if you are in a temporary position your contract must be at least 12 months' duration) **or**
 - Working continuously for the past 12 months.

* Actively at work means that:

- You are working your normal contracted number of hours
- You have not received medical advice to refrain from work
- You are not restricted from fully performing the normal duties associated with your occupation
- Those on statutory paid and unpaid maternity leave can be considered actively at work and are eligible to join.

Please note: Members on paid or unpaid maternity leave are eligible to join the Plan.

Job/work sharers

Job/work sharing members of the AHCPS & VOA who satisfy the eligibility conditions opposite may also apply to join the AHCPS & VOA Income Continuance Plan. The level of contribution and benefits which apply for them may differ from those relevant for the full time members.

Important

You must remain a member of the AHCPS or the VOA to remain an eligible member of the Plan. If you leave the AHCPS or the VOA you must inform Cornmarket in writing as you can no longer stay in the Plan and you will not be able to claim from it.

How to Join?

The AHCPS & VOA Income Continuance Plan helps members maintain the standard of living they deserve. If you haven't already joined the Plan, don't put it on the long finger.

Cover begins as soon as New Ireland accepts you as a member of the Plan.

Apply to join now,
simply call us on
(01) 470 8054

Frequently asked questions

1. When does my membership begin?

Your cover begins from the date New Ireland accepts your application to the Plan. Members receive a formal acceptance letter confirming they have been included as members of the AHCPs & VOA Income Continuance Plan. In some cases medical evidence may be required before membership of the Plan can be confirmed. This may involve providing further details over the telephone or attending a medical examination at New Ireland's expense.

Please note

Any sick leave accrued before you became a member of the Plan will not be used when calculating the deferred period.

2. When does my membership end?

Membership of the Plan ends:

- On your 65th birthday **or**
- If you no longer fulfil the eligibility requirements as set out **or**
- If your contributions to the Plan cease (please bear in mind that the responsibility to ensure that the correct contributions to the Plan are paid rests with you) **or**
- On your retirement (other than on the grounds of ill-health) **or**
- Death.

Notice period if you plan to retire

It is important to remember that Cornmarket may not be notified by your employer when you retire. It is vital therefore that you notify Cornmarket at least 10 weeks in advance of your retirement date so that we can stop your contributions to the Plan.

3. When does benefit payment under the Plan begin?

Once New Ireland has accepted your claim and you have completed the relevant deferred period, benefit payment will commence.

Please remember that it can take a number of weeks to process your claim. As soon as you become aware that, due to illness or injury, your salary is likely to reduce to half pay or cease altogether, please let us know. Ideally, we should be informed about 8-9 weeks in advance to enable the Insurance Company to assess your claim and gather the relevant medical and employer information. As we understand that this may not always be possible, New Ireland may not be able to pay your benefit at the time that your salary reduces or ceases. In such cases your benefit may, depending on the particular circumstances, be backdated to the date when your salary reduced to half pay or stopped altogether, where the claim is subsequently admitted.

4. For how long will I be paid benefit under the Plan?

The Plan will continue to pay benefit for as long as you are totally unable, due to disability from illness or injury, to carry out your normal occupation and you are not following any other occupation. Disability Benefit payments will stop when either:

- you recover, i.e. when it has been determined by New Ireland, based on medical evidence, that you are no longer prevented from carrying out your normal occupation **or**
- you return to work **or**
- you die **or**
- you reach your 65th birthday.

In certain cases benefits may be paid where the member returns to work but at a reduced level of earnings due to partial disability.

Notice period if claim is ended

In the case of claimants who have been in receipt of benefit for at least one year, where medical evidence indicates that a member is fit to return to work, New Ireland will give 3 months' notice before ending the payment of benefit. This only applies to those cases where a claim has been in continuous payment for 12 months or more.

5. How disabled do I have to be to qualify for benefit under the Plan?

To qualify for disability benefit under the Plan, New Ireland must be satisfied that you are totally unable to carry out your duties under your normal occupation by reason of disablement due to illness or injury, and that you are not engaged in any other occupation for profit or reward or remuneration.

Definition of 'Disabled'

An Insured Person is disabled if, in the opinion of the Company, he/she is, by reason of injury or illness, totally unable to engage in the duties of his/her Normal Occupation by reason of disablement arising from bodily injury sustained or from sickness or illness contracted and is not engaged in any other gainful occupation on a full-time or part-time basis. Disability shall have a corresponding meaning.

Partial disablement shall be deemed to exist where, following payment of Disability Benefit, the Insured Person, while partially Disabled due to the illness or injury from which the prior Period of Disability arose:

- i) Undertakes with the consent of the Company for profit or reward some occupation or his/her Normal Occupation

and

- ii) His/her average monthly earnings are, in the opinion of the Company, reduced as a result of his/her partial Disability to an amount less than his/her average monthly earnings during the twelve months immediately prior to the Period of Disability.

6. What if I take a career break, take unpaid leave or change my working hours?

If you intend taking a career break, take unpaid leave or change your hours (e.g. Job Sharing) please contact Cornmarket on **(01) 408 4195** to discuss the options available.

7. Are there any exclusions under the Plan?

There are no exclusions under the Disability Benefit.

Exclusions applying to the Accidental Death Benefit where death is caused directly or indirectly by:

- Suicide, attempted suicide or intentional self inflicted injury
- Death linked to being under the influence of or being affected (temporarily or otherwise) by alcohol or drugs
- Engaging in any hazardous activity or sports including but not limited to the following: scuba diving, motor sports, aviation, hang gliding, water sports, horse racing, parachuting, mountaineering, rock climbing, caving or winter/ice sports
- Flying, except as a fare paying passenger
- Taking part in any riot, civil commotion, uprising or war (whether declared or not) or any related act or incident
- Directly or indirectly by taking part in a criminal act; or
- Failure to follow reasonable medical advice or failure to follow medically recommended therapies, treatment or surgery.

Please bear in mind that in some cases individual members may be accepted into the Plan subject to exclusions in respect of specific illnesses. Once an exclusion is applied, sick leave due to the excluded condition cannot be included in relation to any aspect of a claim.

8. What benefits do members on a temporary contract get?

A claim in respect of a member on a temporary contract is treated in the normal manner as outlined in questions 3 and 4. If a member cannot work due to illness or injury and their contract expires before the expiry date of the deferred period (13 weeks in any 12 month period), their claim will be considered subject to the usual medical evidence requirement. For example, if a member suffers an illness with 3 months or less remaining on their contract, and remains disabled to the end of the deferred period, their claim will be considered in the normal manner.

9. What if I have unearned income?

In general, investment and rental income will not be taken into account when making a claim under the Plan. Benefit from any accident or sickness policy will however be taken into account, except once-off lump sum benefits paid under a critical/serious illness policy.

Additionally, other income received from other sources (for example another employment) shall be considered in the financial assessment of your claim.

Please contact
Cornmarket for full
details of the Plan.



Claiming from the Plan

A step-by-step guide

Cornmarket's role is to help guide members through the claims process. We have considerable experience in this area and, on behalf of claimants, work closely with the relevant insurance companies to ensure that all legitimate claims are promptly paid. We are here to talk you through the process and explain any additional documentation that you may be required to provide.

1. Contact Cornmarket

Cornmarket is not automatically notified of your absence from work through illness. This means as soon as you become aware that, due to illness or injury, your salary is likely to reduce to half pay or cease altogether, please let us know. Ideally, we should be informed about **8-9 weeks** in advance to enable New Ireland to assess your claim and gather the relevant medical and employer information. As we understand that this may not always be possible, New Ireland may not be able to pay your benefit at the time your salary reduces or ceases. In such cases the benefit may be backdated where the claim is subsequently admitted.

You can contact us by calling the Claims Team on **(01) 408 4018**.

Or write to us at:
SPS Claims Department,
Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd.,
Christchurch Square, Dublin 8.

2. Your Claims Pack

Once you have informed us that you wish to make a claim, you will be issued with a claims pack containing all of the information that is required to enable New Ireland to assess your claim.

3. Processing your Claim

Upon receipt of your completed claim form, New Ireland will begin assessing your claim.

4. Medical Examination

Medical evidence will be assessed by New Ireland. In some cases the insurer will request that you attend an independent medical examination (at New Ireland's expense) to confirm you are indeed totally unable to carry out your normal job because of your disability.

5. Additional Medical Evidence

In all cases New Ireland will require additional medical evidence from doctors and/or specialists who have attended you. You may possibly be requested to attend a further medical examination (at New Ireland's expense).

6. Decision on your Claim

Once all the medical evidence and documentation has been received, the insurer will make a decision on your claim.

7. Your Benefit

Once a claim is being paid, payment of the benefit is made by New Ireland monthly in arrears. Benefit payments are subject to income tax.

Your benefit will continue to be paid for as long as you remain unfit to carry out your normal occupation because of disability from illness or injury. Benefit payments will stop when:

- You recover, i.e. when New Ireland decides, based on medical evidence, that you are no longer prevented from carrying out your normal occupation due to disability arising from illness or injury **or**
 - You return to work **or**
 - You die **or**
 - your 65th birthday
- whichever is the earliest.

In certain cases, benefit may be paid where you return to work at a reduced level of earnings due to partial disability. From time to time, New Ireland will require medical evidence confirming that you remain unfit to work.

8. Claimants' Tax Return Service

Claimants of the Plan, whose claim is in payment for a minimum of 3 months, have the option to avail of the Claimants' Tax Return Service provided by Midas.

Midas is a tax-based service and not a regulated financial product. Cornmarket Retail Trading Ltd. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd.

Please contact
Cornmarket for full
details of the Plan.

Important

Short-term claims

As a result of recent changes to Public Sector sick pay arrangements there is a likelihood of an increase in short-term claims. With some short-term claims, the medical evidence required may not be as detailed as that required for a long-term claim.

Late notification of claims

It is not often possible to retrospectively assess the validity of a claim in cases where a significant period of time (approx. 3 months) has elapsed since your salary reduced or ceased. For this reason, it is vital that you register your claim promptly in line with the guidelines given (**8-9 weeks** before your salary reduces to half pay or ceases altogether). In the case of late notification of a claim, cases will be assessed on individual merit and the insurer reserves the right to decline to assess the claim.

The AHCPS & VOA Income Continuance Plan

This guide provides an outline only of the main benefits of the AHCPS & VOA Income Continuance Plan as of January 2015, and is issued subject to the provisions of the policy, and does not create or confer any legal rights.

The information contained herein is based upon our current understanding of the Public Sector Sick leave arrangements and Revenue law and practice as of January 2015.

The AHCPS & VOA Income Continuance Plan is governed by the master Policy Document issued by New Ireland. Members of the Plan may request a copy of the policy document from the Head Office of the AHCPS or the VOA or the Dublin office of Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd.

If there is any conflict between this document and the Policy document, the Policy document will prevail.

Cornmarket is committed to providing a high level of service and has a complaint handling procedure in place. Should you feel that you have not received a satisfactory level of service, please write in the first instance to Jane Horan, Assistant Manager, Compliance Department, Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd, Christchurch Square, Dublin 8.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint through Cornmarket, you may also submit your complaint to the Financial Services Ombudsman's Bureau, 3rd Floor, Lincoln House, Lincoln Place, Dublin 2, or logon to www.financialombudsman.ie.

Join the Scheme: Call us on **(01) 470 8054**
or email **clientservices@cornmarket.ie**

For general scheme queries: Call us on **(01) 408 4195**
or email **spsadmin@cornmarket.ie**

To make a claim: Call us on **(01) 408 4018**
or email **spsclaims@cornmarket.ie**
or visit **cornmarket.ie**