

Other issues:

School transport refunds; In This Together campaign; Tidy Towns; ICT for schools; Extension of driver's licences;

Refunds for school transport

The Government has announced that families will receive refunds for school transport fees for periods of schools closures. The payments will issue at the end of the school year once the exact period of closures is confirmed.

School bus contractors will continue to receive a 50% payment while schools are closed in this academic year.

Following the initial announcement that schools would be closed until 29 March 2020, and in light of the exceptional circumstances, it was agreed that school transport contractors would be paid at the normal or full rate for that period.

It was then decided that a payment of 50% would be afforded for the week commencing Monday 30 March 2020 until now. This 50% payment will be extended whilst schools are closed in this academic year as a result of the public health restrictions.

In This Together campaign:

The Government has launched a new campaign - In This Together - which aims to help everyone in Ireland to Stay Connected, Stay Active, and look after their Mental Wellbeing throughout the Covid-19 Emergency.

The campaign encourages everyone to pick a new activity which could help them to feel a little healthier or a little better as we deal with Covid-19.

It signposts useful advice to help people of every age group to cope with the ongoing restrictions, whether they are looking after children, dealing with self-isolation, preparing for the Leaving Cert, or coping with cabin fever.

In This Together will offer regular videos, ideas and activities for people of all ages throughout the Emergency, over social media, through our partners in the media and promoted by the Community Call Forums which have been set up across Ireland.

All this information is being made available on [gov.ie/Together](https://www.gov.ie/Together), on your local authority website, on social media, television, radio and newspapers throughout the Emergency and you can find details of local initiatives on your local authority website.

Cancellation of Tidy Towns Competition:

Minister Michael Ring has announced the cancellation of the TidyTowns competition for 2020 in the interests of public health and safety.

The health and welfare of the volunteers on the TidyTowns Committees is paramount.

Given the current restrictions around public gatherings, travel, and adherence to social distancing, it would not be appropriate to ask voluntary groups to work on TidyTowns projects in their communities at this time.

The Department of Rural Affairs will look at initiatives, including through the use of social media, to help sustain and maintain the spirit and ethos of TidyTowns during these difficult times.

Extension of expiry date for drivers licences and other docs:

Under new measures announced by Minister Ross the following have come into effect in relation to vehicle testing:

For NCT and Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness Tests (CVRT) – vehicles with a test that was or will be due on or after 28 March 2020 have that test date extended by 4 months

Driving licenses, learner permits, driver theory test certs, certificates of competency and initial basic training certificates (for motorcycle learners) due to expire between 1 March 2020 and 30 June 2020 inclusive have had their date of expiry extended by 4 months

It will no longer be longer necessary to have a current Certificate of Roadworthiness (CRW) in order to tax a commercial vehicle. You should be able to renew your motor tax for a commercial vehicle from 21 April 2020, without need of a CRW.

Because driving licence offices and NCT facilities are closed there will be no issuing of new documents The Garda Síochána are aware of the changes and will accept your current licence or disc as being valid for the new period