

THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF INTEGRATED SOCIAL PROTECTION STATISTICS (ESSPROS)

Receipts and expenditure of the social protection system in 2019

Financing of the social protection system in the country is realised either through social security contributions or through direct funding from the state budget. In 2019, the total receipts recorded in ESSPROS for financing the social protection system amounted to 21 760.7 million BGN, from which 8 129.0 million BGN were funds from the state budget, 13 258.3 million BGN were funds from social protection contributions and 373.3 million BGN were classified as other receipts (Table 1). Compared to the previous year, there was an increase of 14.8% and 1.8% of the receipts from social protection contributions and of the general government contributions respectively.

1. Receipts of the social protection system, 2017 - 2019

| | 2017 | | 2018 | | 2019 | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Million BGN | % | Million BGN | % | Million BGN | % |
| Total receipts | 18750.3 | 100.0 | 19896.0 | 100.0 | 21760.7 | 100.0 |
| Social contributions | 10531.4 | 56.2 | 11552.1 | 58.1 | 13258.3 | 60.9 |
| General government contributions | 7874.2 | 42.0 | 7986.5 | 40.1 | 8129.0 | 37.4 |
| Other receipts | 344.8 | 1.8 | 357.3 | 1.8 | 373.3 | 1.7 |

In 2019, Bulgaria spent 19 918.5 million BGN (Table 2) for social protection, which represented 18.2% of the gross domestic product for the same year. Compared to the previous year, 2018, the total expenditure on social protection increased by 7.6% and their corresponding share of the gross domestic product decreased by 0.2 percentage points.

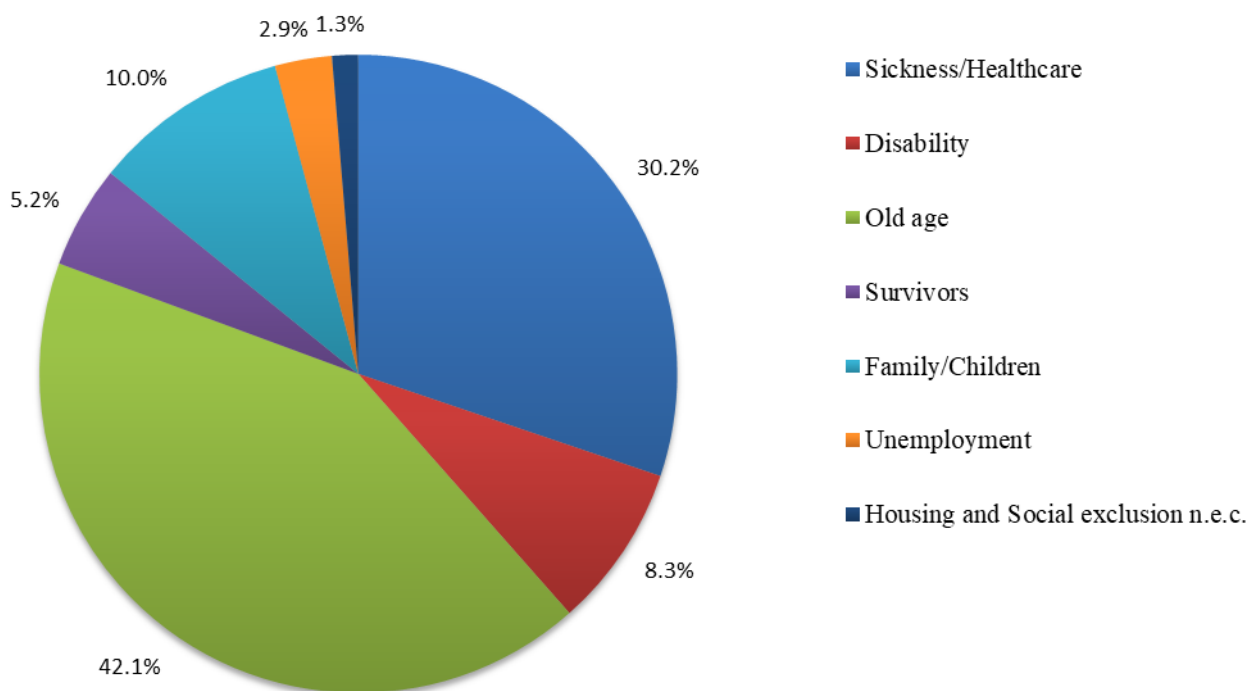
2. Expenditure of the social protection system and share of the gross domestic product, 2017 – 2019

| | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Total expenditure (million BGN) | 17275.6 | 18509.5 | 19918.5 |
| Relative share of gross domestic product (%) | 17.1 | 18.4 | 18.2 |

Social protection benefits

The 'Old age' function with its major component expenditure for pensions had the highest share (42.1%) in total expenditure. The 'Sickness/Healthcare' and 'Family/Children' functions also had a significant share of total expenditure - 30.2% and 10.0% respectively.

Figure 1. Distribution of social protection benefits by function in 2019



The most common form of receipt of social benefits is the payment of cash benefits (periodic or lump sum). In 2019, the expenditure on cash benefits amounted to 12 750.1 million BGN or 66.2% of total expenditure on social protection benefits.

Around 63% of the cash benefits were paid under the ‘Old age’ function (Table 3) and most of them were not associated with the requirement to cover any additional conditions on their receipt (i.e. they were non-means tested) as a result of participation in the social protection system. Benefits paid under ‘Disability’ and ‘Family/Children’ functions had a share of total expenditure on social protection benefits of 10.3% and 9.2% respectively.

In 2019, expenditure on benefits in kind amounted to 6 508.9 million BGN, with an increase of 9% compared to 2018. The highest relative share of benefits in kind was found in the expenditure under the ‘Sickness/Healthcare’ function (79.7%).

3. Social protection benefits type, 2017 - 2019

| | 2017 | | 2018 | | 2019 | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Million BGN | % | Million BGN | % | Million BGN | % |
| Cash benefits - total | 11011.95 | 100.0 | 12030.9 | 100.0 | 12750.1 | 100.0 |
| Sickness/Healthcare | 540.7 | 4.9 | 592.5 | 5.1 | 627.6 | 5.1 |
| Disability | 1027.5 | 9.3 | 1057.5 | 9.1 | 1318.9 | 10.3 |
| Old age | 7312.5 | 66.4 | 7702.9 | 64.0 | 8068.3 | 63.3 |
| Survivors | 909.96 | 8.3 | 955.4 | 7.9 | 1003.5 | 7.9 |
| Family/Children | 749.29 | 6.8 | 1170.0 | 9.7 | 1174.7 | 9.2 |
| Unemployment | 472.05 | 4.3 | 518.3 | 4.3 | 526.7 | 4.1 |
| Housing and social exclusion | 35.1 | 0.3 | 34.4 | 0.3 | 30.4 | 0.2 |
| Benefits in kind - total | 5433.0 | 100.0 | 5972.9 | 100.0 | 6508.9 | 100.0 |
| Sickness/Healthcare | 4276.8 | 78.7 | 4743.8 | 79.4 | 5186.6 | 79.7 |
| Disability | 220.8 | 4.1 | 255.7 | 4.3 | 279.5 | 4.3 |
| Old age | 39.8 | 0.7 | 42.8 | 0.7 | 46.8 | 0.7 |
| Survivors | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| Family/Children | 690.5 | 12.7 | 699.3 | 11.7 | 741.9 | 11.4 |
| Unemployment | 33.7 | 0.6 | 31.7 | 0.5 | 29.8 | 0.5 |
| Housing and social exclusion | 171.1 | 3.1 | 199.5 | 3.3 | 224.2 | 3.4 |

Changes in the social protection system over the years can be traced by functions and benefits included in them.

‘Sickness/Healthcare’ function

The ‘Sickness/Healthcare’ function includes: ‘cash benefits that replace in whole or in part loss of earnings during temporary inability to work due to sickness or injury; medical care provided in the framework of social protection to maintain, restore or improve the health of the people protected’¹.

In 2019, 5 814.2 million BGN were paid under the ‘Sickness/Healthcare’ function or 30.2% of the total benefits paid. The highest share of expenditure is for medical and hospital care, prophylactics and rehabilitation - 43.5% of the spending in the function, followed by the expenses for pharmaceutical products - 22.6%.

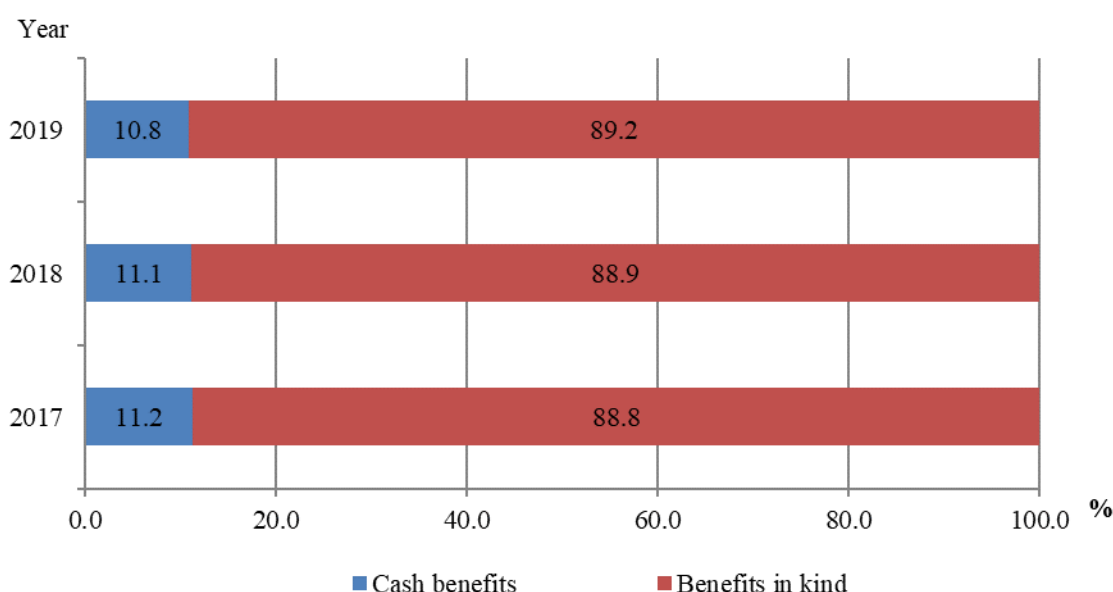
Expenditure on cash benefits (periodic and lump sum) represented 10.8% of total benefits paid under this function and amounted to 627.6 million BGN. Periodic cash benefits covered paid leave due to accident at

¹ ‘European system of integrated social protection statistics - ESSPROS, Manual and user guidelines’, 2016 edition.

work, occupational disease or sickness. The expenditure for temporary disability benefits were 10.4% of the total benefits paid under this function. Lump sum benefits included the financial resources provided for treatment of persons less than 18 years of age abroad, expenses for the treatment of Bulgarian citizens abroad to the Commission for Treatment Abroad (for persons over 18 years) as well as the financial support of Bulgarian citizens for assisted reproduction at medical establishments in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Benefits in kind paid in 2019 amounted to 5 186.6 million BGN and covered payments on in-patient, primary and specialized out-patient healthcare, dental care, medical-diagnostic activities and payments for medical products and supplies financed by the National Health Insurance Fund. Expenditure on benefits in kind also included payments for emergency medical care centres, homes for medical and social care and state psychiatric hospitals made by the Ministry of Health, as well as payments for healthcare services contracted through supplementary health insurance. In 2019, the share of benefits in kind from the total expenditure paid under the function was 89.2%.

Figure 2. Structure of expenditure for function ‘Sickness/Healthcare’, 2017 - 2019



‘Disability’ function

The ‘Disability’ function includes benefits that: ‘provide an income to persons below standard retirement age as established in the reference scheme whose ability to work and earn is impaired beyond a minimum level laid down by legislation by a physical or mental disability; provide rehabilitation services specifically required by disabilities; provide goods and services other than medical care to disabled people’².

² ‘European system of integrated social protection statistics - ESSPROS, Manual and user guidelines’, 2016 edition.

Biggest share of expenses under the “Disability” function are paid under the Law of people with disabilities, which was promulgated with the State Gazette, issue 105 of 18.12.2018, from 01.01.2019, repealing the existing Law on integration of people with disabilities.

In 2019, 1 598.4 million BGN were paid under the ‘Disability’ function or 8.3% of total social protection benefits paid. 82.5% of the benefits paid under this function were in cash. Periodic cash benefits covered disability pensions due to a general illness, a work accident and occupational disease, a pension for military or civil disability, a social disability pension, which represented the highest share of expenditure - 58.5% or 771.8 million BGN. Care assistance allowance took 6.8% of the total expenditure under the function or 89.9 million BGN. The monthly supplement for social integration of people with disabilities had the smallest share of the expenditure in the function - 0.1% or 1.3 million BGN. The monthly targeted allowance for telephone services for war invalids and the allowance for social integration according to the individual needs and to the degree of reduced working capacity or type and extent of the disability represented 31.7% of the expenses on the function and were around 418.2 million BGN. Lump-sum benefits amounted to 37.6 million BGN are intended for financing of an employer under a National program for employment of people with disabilities for providing access, adaptation and equipment at the workplace as well as for qualification and training, respectively training for professional development of people with disabilities, for targeted assistance to provide aids, devices, equipment and medical tools to people with disabilities with an established need for such. These amounts also included lump sum payments of 50% of the funds in the individual account in a universal or occupational retirement fund in case of life-long disability.

Expenditure on benefits in kind in 2019 amounted to 279.5 million BGN or 17.5% of total social protection expenditure paid under this function. The main share of expenditure (58.7%) was that of expenditure on assistance in carrying out daily tasks - home social patronage, social and personal assistants. Benefits in kind also included expenditure on homes for disabled elderly people, sheltered housing classified as accommodation expenditure as well as costs on rehabilitation and day care centres for people with disabilities.

4. Distribution of benefits in kind under the ‘Disability’ function, 2017 - 2019

| | 2017 | | 2018 | | 2019 | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | Million BGN | % | Million BGN | % | Million BGN | % |
| Benefits in kind | 220.8 | 100.0 | 255.7 | 100.0 | 279.5 | 100.0 |
| Accommodation | 55.0 | 24.9 | 58.3 | 22.8 | 62.1 | 22.2 |
| Assistance for daily activities | 120.2 | 54.5 | 148.5 | 58.1 | 164.0 | 58.7 |
| Rehabilitation | 16.9 | 7.6 | 18.1 | 7.1 | 19.0 | 6.8 |
| Other benefits in kind | 28.7 | 13.0 | 30.8 | 12.0 | 34.3 | 12.3 |

‘Old age’ function

The ‘Old age’ function includes benefits that: ‘provide a replacement income when the aged person retires from the labour market; guarantee a certain income when a person has reached a prescribed age; provide goods or services specifically required by the personal or social circumstances of the elderly’³.

The expenditure under this function had the biggest share of total social protection benefits paid (around 43.0% through the period 2017 - 2019). This function included all types of pensions granted after reaching the standard retirement age. In 2019, 8 068.3 million BGN cash benefits were paid under the ‘Old age’ function from which 8.059.7 million BGN were cash benefits connected to the participation in the social contribution system (i.e. non-means tested) and 8.7 million BGN were cash benefits which are obtained after the application of an income criteria (i.e. means-tested).

In 2019, 46.8 million BGN were paid under the ‘Old age’ function for benefits in kind (expenditure on homes for elderly and day care centres for the elderly) or 0.6% of total expenditure paid under the function.

‘Survivors’ function

The ‘Survivors’ function includes benefits that: ‘provide temporary or permanent income to people who have suffered from the loss of the spouse or a next-of-kin, usually when the latter represented the main breadwinner for the beneficiary; compensate survivors for funeral costs and for any hardship caused by the death of a family member’⁴.

Survivors eligible for benefit may be the spouse or ex-spouse of the deceased person, his or her children, grandchildren, parents or other relatives. Benefits provided under the function are non means-tested.

In 2019, 1003.6 million BGN were paid under the ‘Survivors’ function or 5.2% of the total social protection benefits paid. The function included survivors’ pensions, which took 30.8% of the total expenditure. Supplement to the pension in case of deceased spouse, took the biggest share of the spending here – 66.0%. The lump sums provided to survivors of a deceased person who has insured him or herself at Universal/ Professional pension fund were 2.5% of the total or 24.7 million BGN.

The expenditure on benefits in kind in 2019 under the ‘Survivors’ function amounted to 0.1 million BGN and included lump sum allowances for funeral expenses paid under the Military invalids and victims Act.

‘Family/Children’ function

The ‘Family/children’ function includes benefits that: ‘provide financial support to households for bringing up children; provide financial assistance to people who support relatives other than children; provide social services specifically designed to assist and protect the family, particularly children’¹.

In 2019, the expenditure on benefits under the ‘Family/Children’ function was 10.0% of total social protection expenditure. The total amount of social protection benefits paid under the function was 1 916.6 million BGN and compared to previous year increased by 2.5%.

In 2019, 335.8 million BGN or 17.5% of social protection expenditure paid under the function was allocated for means-tested cash benefits. These benefits included:

- Monthly allowance for raising a child up to one year for an uninsured parent, amounting to 15.1 million BGN, or 0.8% of the paid benefits under the function;

³ ‘European system of integrated social protection statistics - ESSPROS, Manual and user guidelines’, 2016 edition.

⁴ ‘European system of integrated social protection statistics - ESSPROS, Manual and user guidelines’, 2016 edition.

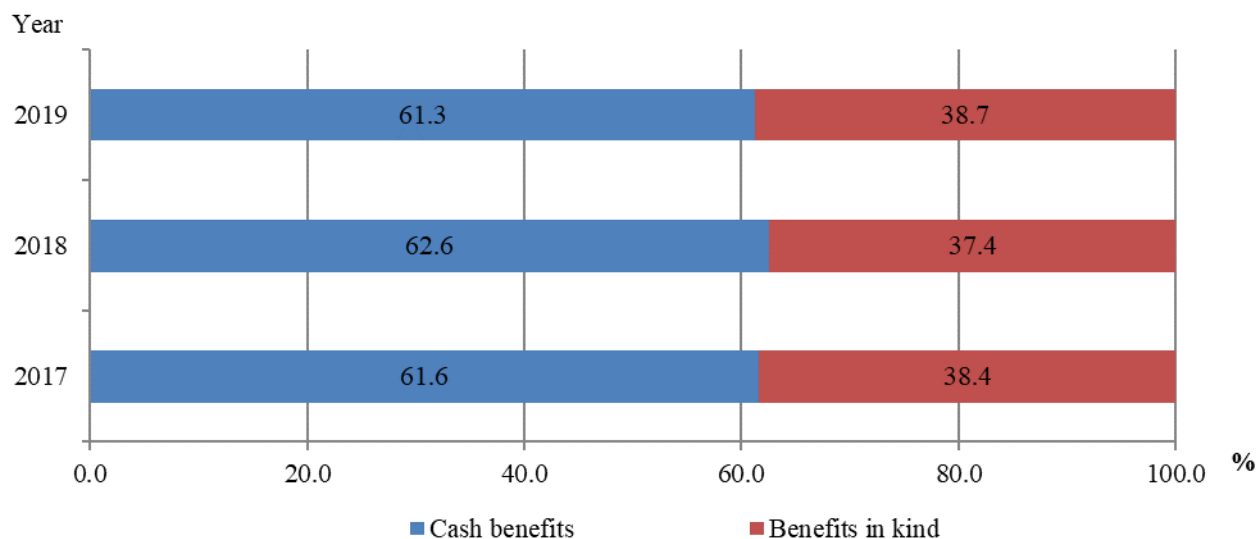
- Monthly allowance for raising a child until the completion of secondary education but not above 20 years of age, in the amount of 285.4 million BGN, or 14.9% of the paid benefits under the function;
- Monthly childcare allowance for children accommodated in families of relatives or close relatives, scholarships to support access to education and prevent dropping out after completing primary education and scholarships for students in tertiary education who have low income, to the amount of 28.8 million BGN, or 1.5% of benefits paid under the function;
- Lump sum pregnancy assistance allowance for uninsured women and one-time targeted assistance allowance for children in the first grade, amounting to 6.6 million BGN, or 0.3% of the paid benefits under the function.

Benefits granted without fulfilling any special conditions (i.e. non means-tested) were:

- Pregnancy and childbirth allowance, labour readjustment compensation in case of pregnancy and breast feeding, which were 446.9 million BGN or 23.3% of the paid benefits under this function.
- Paid parental leave for bringing up a small child, allowances for the adoption of a child from 2 to 5 years of age, monthly allowances for bringing up a child with permanent disabilities up to 2 years of age, represented 9.2% of the spending made or 176.8 million BGN.
- Monthly benefits for bringing up and educating children accommodated in families of relatives, close relatives or in foster families, monthly allowances for children with permanent disabilities up to the age of 18 but not later than the age of 20; monthly allowances for children with disabilities accommodated in families of relatives, close relatives or in foster families and monthly benefit for children with one live parent which represented 9.4% of the total benefits paid under the function or 179.4 million BGN.
- Lump sum benefit paid for birth of a live child or in case of adoption was 24.9 million BGN or 1.3% of the benefits paid under this function.
- Lump sum benefit paid for bringing up a child from a mother-student, lump sum benefit for bringing up twins and lump sum benefit for prevention of abandonment and reintegration of the child in a family environment amounted to 3.8 million BGN, or less than 0.2% of the benefits paid under this function.

Benefits in kind included the costs of crèches, accommodation costs covering the ‘Mother and baby’ units, centres for family-type accommodation and children’s homes as well as allowances for free traveling of mothers of many children and social benefits in kind paid by the employer. Benefits in kind paid under the function ‘Family/Children’ in 2019 amounted to 741.9 million BGN or 38.7% of the total social protection expenditure paid under the function. Compared to the previous year the amount of benefits in kind increased by 6.1%.

Figure 3. Structure of expenditure for function ‘Family/Children’, 2017 – 2019



‘Unemployment’ function

The ‘Unemployment’ function includes benefits that: ‘replace in whole or in part income lost by a worker due to the loss of gainful employment; provide a subsistence (or better) income to persons entering or re-entering the labour market; compensate for the loss of earnings due to partial unemployment; contribute to the cost of training or re-training people looking for employment; help unemployed persons meet the cost of travelling or relocating to obtain employment; provide help and relief by providing appropriate goods and services’⁵.

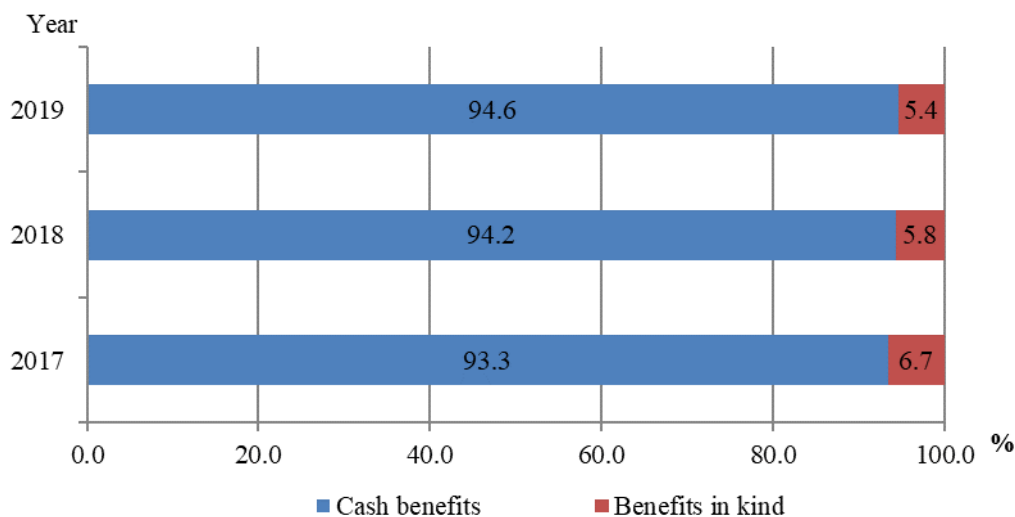
In 2019, 556.4 million BGN were paid under the function ‘Unemployment’ or 2.9% of total social protection expenditure. Compared to the previous year, the social protection expenditure under this function increased by 1.2%. The highest share (76.0%) was the periodic cash payments for benefits compensating the loss of income when a person was able to work and was available for work but was not able to find suitable employment for him/her, including persons not previously employed.

The share of lump sum cash benefits of the cash benefits provided under this function in 2019 (18.7%) increased with 2.8 percentage points compared to the previous year. Lump sum benefits were amounts paid to employees who have been dismissed in case the company suspended or ceased its activities. This benefit may be paid directly by the employer or by a fund created specifically for that purpose.

Benefits in kind refer to active labour market measures and include the cost of hiring unemployed people outside the settlement by permanent address, training costs, and job search and employment services. Here were included the expenditure under the Operational Program ‘Human Resources Development’, programs: ‘Youth employment’, ‘Training and employment of young people’ and ‘Training and employment’. The share of benefits in kind from the total benefits paid under this function in 2019 was 5.4% and it decreased by 0.4 percentage points compared to the previous year.

⁵ ‘European system of integrated social protection statistics - ESSPROS, Manual and user guidelines’, 2016 edition.

Figure 4. Structure of expenditure for function ‘Unemployment’, 2017 – 2019



‘Housing’ function

The ‘Housing’ function is based on the ‘interventions of public authorities to help households meet the cost of housing. An essential criterion for defining the scope of the ‘Housing’ function is the existence of qualifying means-test for the benefit’⁶.

In Bulgaria such benefits are provided in kind. Under the function the monthly allowances for rent payment of a municipal dwelling were reported, where beneficiaries may be orphans up to 25 years of age who have completed a social educational centre, single elderly people over the age of 70 years and a parent bringing up children alone. Monthly allowance for basic subsistence needs - rent for a municipal dwelling was also included, where beneficiaries may be single persons with permanently reduced working capacity or with certain type and degree of disability.

In 2019, 0.5 million BGN were paid under the ‘Housing’ function, with an increase of 17.8% compared to 2018.

‘Social exclusion not elsewhere classified’ function

While the above-mentioned functions refer to people subject to clearly identifiable risks or needs (the elderly, the disabled, the unemployed, etc.), the present function refers to the ‘socially excluded’ or ‘those at risk of social exclusion’⁷.

The concept of social exclusion is multidimensional: it first refers to an insufficient level of income (poverty), but also to precarious situations in the field of health, education and employment.

In 2019, 254 million BGN were paid under the function or 8.8% more than the previous year. 30.4 million BGN were allocated for cash benefits or 12.0% of total social protection benefits paid under the function.

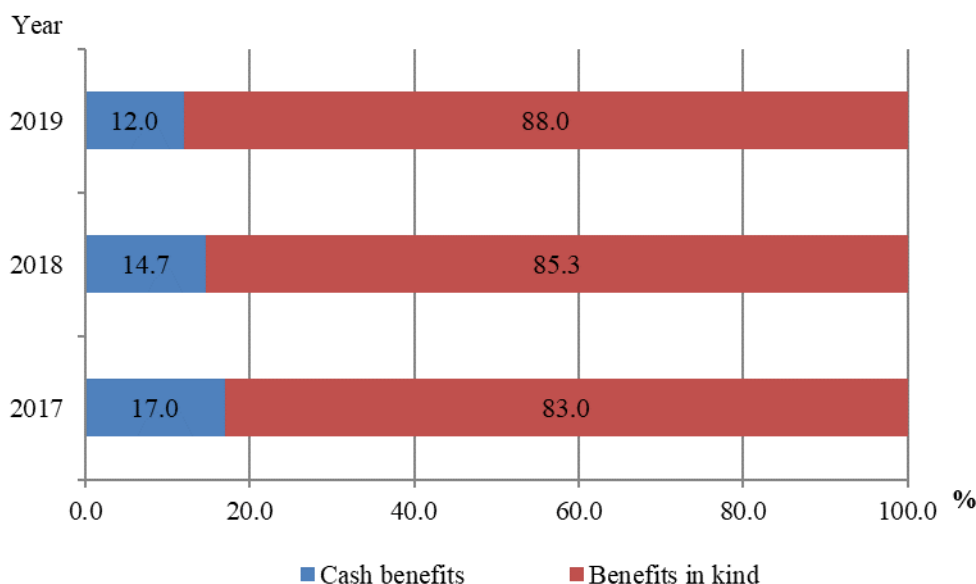
⁶ ‘European system of integrated social protection statistics - ESSPROS, Manual and user guidelines’, 2016 edition.

⁷ ‘European system of integrated social protection statistics - ESSPROS, Manual and user guidelines’, 2016 edition.

They were monthly and lump sum social benefits. Compared to the previous year, the funds allocated to cash benefits in 2019 decreased by 11.5% and their share of total social protection expenditure decreased by 2.7% compared to previous the year.

The total amount of paid benefits in kind in 2019 was 223.6 million BGN and it increased by 12.3% compared to the previous year. Benefits in kind recorded under this function included targeted heating allowances, lump sum allowances for issuing an ID card, lump sum benefit for covering daily and accommodation expenses for persons authorized for treatment abroad by the Ministry of Health, lump sum benefit - provision of individual food packages. These benefits amounted to 117.7 million BGN, or 46.3% of the total expenditure of the function. Other benefits in kind were also included in the function - dental care for war veterans which falls outside the scope of the basic healthcare package guaranteed by the National Health Insurance Fund, expenditure for accommodation in a crisis centre, an observed home, a transition home, a centre for temporary accommodation or in a shelter as well as expenditure on different social services provided in clubs for pensioners, invalids, etc., centres for public support, centres for working with children on the street. These benefits amounted to 105.9 million BGN, or 41.7% of the benefits paid under this function. The share of benefits paid in kind in the total expenditure of the function was 88.0%, or 2.7 percentage points more in 2019 compared to 2018.

Figure 5. Structure of expenditure for function ‘Social exclusion’, 2017 – 2019



Methodological notes

The European System of integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS) is a specific instrument for production of comparable, topical and accurate data on the social payments and their financing at the European level.

The statistical unit in the ESSPROS is called social protection scheme. Social protection schemes should provide protection against a single risk or need and/or cover a single specific group of beneficiaries. Social protection schemes are supported by institutional units and the institutional unit could support more than one social protection scheme in case it administer and supply number of different types of social benefits.

Taking into account the peculiarities of the social protection system in Bulgaria and regarding the European definitions and criteria the following social protection schemes are classified:

1. Fund 'Pensions';
2. Fund 'Pensions not connected to employment';
3. Fund 'Accidents at work and occupational disease';
4. Fund 'Sickness and maternity';
5. Fund 'Unemployment';
6. Teachers' pension fund;
7. Professional pension funds;
8. Universal pension funds;
9. National Health Insurance Fund;
10. Supplementary health insurance;
11. Healthcare financed directly by the Government;
12. Assistance for families with children and child protection;
13. Social assistance;
14. Social integration of disabled persons;
15. Active measures for encouragement of the employment;
16. Social scholarships;
17. Social services provided by municipalities;
18. Employers direct social contributions.

In the core system, social benefits are classified **by function and by type**.

The function of the social benefit refers to the primary purpose for which social protection is provided, irrespective of legislative or institutional provisions. Eight functions of social protection are distinguished:

- Sickness/Healthcare;
- Disability;
- Old age;
- Survivors;
- Family/Children;
- Unemployment;
- Housing;

- Social exclusion not elsewhere classified.

Distribution by functions is applied for social protection benefits, and not for receipts, because a single type of receipt can be used to finance benefits under several different functions.

Social benefits are classified by type at two levels: first - short **general classification**, which concerns all functions and second - more detailed classification where the items concern just one or limited number of functions. The general classification includes cash benefits, which could be periodic or lump sum, and benefits in kind. Benefits in kind are benefits granted in the form of goods and services. They may be provided by way of reimbursement or directly. Reimbursements are benefits in the form of payments that reimburse the recipient in whole or in part for certified expenditure on specified goods and services.

Social benefits are broken down between means-tested and non means-tested. Means-tested social benefits are social benefits, which are explicitly or implicitly conditional on the beneficiary's income and/or wealth below a specified level. It is not necessary for the specified level to be precisely defined at national level; it could be different for the separate schemes and it could even be different for the separate types of benefits provided by a given scheme.

More information and data on receipts and expenditure for social protection can be found on the website of NSI, section 'Social protection' (<http://www.nsi.bg/bg/node/4061>) and on the Information System 'INFOSTAT' (https://infostat.nsi.bg/infostat/pages/module.jsf?x_2=45).