

# Coronavirus support for employees, benefit claimants and businesses

Following announcements in the Budget, the Department for Work and Pensions is making temporary arrangements to support those impacted by coronavirus.

## **For people already claiming support**

Special arrangements will be in place for people in receipt of benefits who cannot attend reassessments or jobcentre appointments because they are required to stay at home or are infected by coronavirus.

The arrangements are:

- disabled and sick claimants who cannot attend a reassessment for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit will continue to receive their payments while their assessment is rearranged
- people who need to claim ESA or Universal Credit because of coronavirus will not be required to produce a fit note.
- when claimants tell us in good time that they are staying at home or that they have been diagnosed with coronavirus, they will not be sanctioned – we will review their conditionality requirements in their claimant commitment, to ensure they are reasonable
- claimants who are staying at home as a result of coronavirus will have their mandatory work search and work availability requirements removed to account for a period of sickness

## **For people who need to make a new claim for financial support**

We understand people who are required to stay at home or are infected by coronavirus may need financial support, and quickly.

We announce that:

- those affected by coronavirus will be able to apply for Universal Credit and can receive up to a month's advance up front without physically attending a jobcentre
- the 7 waiting days for ESA for new claimants will not apply if they are suffering from coronavirus or are required to stay at home – so it will be payable from day one

## **Employees and self-employed people**

To make sure people in work can take the necessary time off to stay at home if they are suffering from coronavirus or to prevent its spread, changes have been made to Statutory Sick Pay and how Universal Credit supports self-

employed claimants.

This includes:

- people who cannot work due to coronavirus and are eligible for Statutory Sick Pay will get it from day one, rather than from the fourth day of their illness – we intend to legislate so this measure applies retrospectively from 13 March 2020
- Statutory Sick Pay will be payable to people who are staying at home on government advice, not just those who are infected, from 13 March 2020 after regulations were laid on 12 March 2020 – employers are urged to use their discretion about what evidence, if any, they ask for
- if employees need to provide evidence to their employer that they need to stay at home due to coronavirus, they will be able to get it from the NHS 111 Online instead of having to get a fit note from their doctor – this is currently under development and will be made available soon
- self-employed claimants on Universal Credit who are required to stay at home or are ill as a result of coronavirus will not have a Minimum Income Floor (an assumed level of income) applied for a period of time while affected

## **Businesses**

The government wants to ensure businesses are supported to deal with the temporary economic impacts of an outbreak of coronavirus.

Employers with fewer than 250 employees will be able to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay for employees unable to work because of coronavirus. This refund will be for up to 2 weeks per employee.

Find out about [other government support for businesses](#).

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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