

# Jobcentre guidance on new national Covid restrictions

Press release

On 31 October 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the Government will be introducing new national COVID-19 measures in England to protect the NHS and save lives.



This means from 5 November 2020 until 2 December 2020 in England, the following updated jobcentre guidance will apply to customers, and will ensure essential support is provided whilst keeping colleagues and customers safe.

- Jobcentres will remain open, as they have throughout this pandemic, to provide essential services and support to those whom we cannot help in any other way.
- We will ensure that this support continues to be delivered in line with the latest government and PHE guidance – such as maintaining social distancing and rigorous cleaning regimes – keeping our colleagues and customers safe.
- Customers will continue to be supported by Work Coaches online and over the phone, with jobcentres remaining open to help those who need extra support and are unable to interact with us on the phone or digitally.
- Our Work Coaches will continue to deliver employment support programmes such as Kickstart and JETS, by phone or through online channels.
- Face-to-face assessments for disability benefits remain suspended.
- If you think you might be entitled to a health and disability benefit, you should contact us as soon as possible to make a claim in the usual way.
- For existing customers, payments will continue as normal. Anyone who has a change in their needs should contact us immediately so we can ensure they are receiving the correct level of support.

On 3 November 2020, we also confirmed that the suspension of the Minimum Income Floor – for self-employed customers claiming Universal Credit in England, Scotland, and Wales – has been extended to the end of April 2021. This means that self-employed customers on Universal Credit will receive a

payment that reflects their earnings at this difficult time.

### **For Scotland:**

On 2 November, the Scottish Government introduced a new five level tiered system. The following will therefore apply to jobcentres and customers in Scotland:

#### **Levels 0, 1 and 2 guidance:**

- Customers will continue to be supported by Work Coaches online and over the phone, with jobcentres remaining open to help those who need extra support and are unable to interact with us on the phone or digitally.
- All jobcentres to remain open – maintaining social distancing and regular desk and communal space cleaning in line with current Covid-19 guidance.
- If you think you might be entitled to a health and disability benefit you should contact us as soon as possible to make a claim in the usual way.
- For existing customers, payments will continue as normal. Anyone who has a change in their needs should contact us immediately so we can ensure they are receiving the correct level of support.

#### **Levels 3 and 4:**

- For these levels, the jobcentre guidance in place for the new national restrictions in England until 2 December 2020 (above) will apply.

### **For Wales:**

The Welsh Government introduced the two week 'firebreak' restrictions in Wales on 26 October 2020 that will last until 9 November 2020. The jobcentre guidance in place for the new national restrictions in England until 2 December 2020 (above) will apply during this period.

After 9 November 2020, the Welsh Government announced an easing of restrictions. From then, the following will apply to jobcentres and customers in Wales:

- All jobcentres to remain open – maintaining social distancing and regular desk and communal space cleaning in line with current Covid-19 guidance.
- Customers will continue to be supported by Work Coaches online and over the phone, with jobcentres remaining open to help those who need extra support and are unable to interact with us on the phone or digitally.

### **For Northern Ireland:**

Please contact the Department for Communities for more information on measures introduced in Northern Ireland – 028 9082 9000.

A DWP spokesperson said:

Jobcentres have remained open throughout this pandemic to provide vital support and essential services to those whom we cannot help remotely.

These new measures will ensure that we can continue this support while keeping our colleagues and customers safe, following the latest Government and PHE guidance.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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Published 9 November 2020