

## **Employee Guidance**

### **Sick pay**

You will receive £94.25 per week Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if you're too ill to work. It's paid by your employer for up to 28 weeks.

If you are staying at home because of COVID-19 you can now claim SSP. This includes individuals who are caring for people in the same household and therefore have been advised to do a household quarantine.

### **SSP start date**

Legislation is being prepared for SSP to be paid from day 1, rather than day 4, of your absence from work if you are absent from work due to sickness or need to stay at home due to COVID-19. Once the legislation has been passed, this will apply retrospectively from 13 March. You should talk to your employer if you are eligible for SSP and need to claim.

### **Proof of sickness**

If you have COVID-19 or are advised to stay at home, you can get an 'isolation note' by visiting [NHS 111 online](#), rather than visiting a doctor. For COVID-19 cases this replaces the usual need to provide a 'fit note' (sometimes called a 'sick note') after 7 days of sickness absence.

### **Furloughed workers**

If your employer cannot cover staff costs due to COVID-19, they may be able to [access support to continue paying part of your wage](#), to avoid redundancies.

If your employer intends to access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, they will discuss with you becoming classified as a furloughed worker. This would mean that you are kept on your employer's payroll, rather than being laid off.

To qualify for this scheme, you should not undertake work for them while you are furloughed. This will allow your employer to claim a grant of up to 80% of your wage for all employment costs, up to a cap of £2,500 per month.

You will remain employed while furloughed. Your employer could choose to fund the differences between this payment and your salary but does not have to.

If your salary is reduced as a result of these changes, you may be [eligible for support through the welfare system](#), including Universal Credit. It is intended for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to run for at least 3 months from 1 March 2020, but will extend if necessary

**If you are self-employed**

You are able to claim Universal Credit, providing you meet the usual eligibility criteria.

To support you with the economic impact of the outbreak and allow you to follow government guidance on self-isolation and social distancing, from 6 April the requirements of the Minimum Income Floor will be temporarily relaxed. This change will apply to all Universal Credit claimants and will last for the duration of the outbreak.

New claimants will not need to attend the jobcentre to demonstrate gainful self-employment

**Claiming Benefits**

Whether you are currently in or out of work, if you are on a low income and affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19, you will be able to access the full range of the welfare system, including Universal Credit.

**If you have COVID-19 or are staying at home**

You are now able to claim Universal Credit, and if required can access advance payments upfront without needing to attend a jobcentre.

**Universal Credit**

To Make a claim – you must have an Email and access to a mobile phone

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit>

**Universal Credit helpline**

Telephone: 0800 328 5644

Textphone: 0800 328 1344

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

You'll get your first payment around 5 weeks after applying online if your application is successful. When you apply, you can ask for an advance if you need help sooner.

**You should not attend the jobcentre unless directed to do so for an exceptional purpose.**

People can still make applications for benefits online if they are eligible.

If you apply for Universal Credit you will need to make an appointment for your new claim interview. This interview will take place by telephone with a work coach. You will be given the number to call to book this appointment when you have submitted your claim.

### **If you're making a new claim**

Don't delay making a benefit claim, even if you think you may be affected by coronavirus.

You can apply for Universal Credit online. If you are eligible you will need to make an appointment for your new claim interview. This interview will take place by telephone with a work coach. You will be given the number to call to book this appointment when you have submitted your claim.

**Universal Credit users are experiencing extended waiting times for GOV.UK Verify. We appreciate how frustrating this is and we are working to improve the situation as quickly as possible.**

If you need to claim Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) because of coronavirus, you will not be required to produce a Fit Note.

If you are affected by coronavirus you will be able to apply for Universal Credit and can receive up to a month's advance upfront without physically attending a jobcentre.

If you are suffering from coronavirus or are required to stay at home and want to apply for ESA, the usual 7 waiting days for new claimants will not apply. ESA will be payable from day one.

### **Support for rent costs**

You should check your eligibility for Universal Credit, which is available for people in and out of work. Support for rental costs will be paid through Universal Credit.

