



COVID-19 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

NORTHERN IRELAND

INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

❖ Information for Employees – Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-employees>

You can get £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.

To check your sick pay entitlement, you should talk to your employer, and visit the Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) page for more information - <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay>

❖ 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 through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, to avoid redundancies.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses#support-for-businesses-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

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.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is intended to run for at least 3 months from 1 March 2020, but will extend if necessary.

❖ If you are self-employed or not eligible for SSP

If you are not eligible for SSP – for example if you are self-employed or earning below the Lower Earnings Limit of £118 per week – and you have COVID-19 or are advised to stay at home, you can now more easily make a claim for Universal Credit or new style Employment and Support Allowance.



Universal Credit - <https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

Anyone self-isolating who is self-employed can apply for Universal Credit or new-style Employment & Support Allowance. You can also apply for these if you are prevented from working because of a risk to public health.

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.

If you are eligible for new style Employment and Support Allowance, it will now be payable from day 1 of sickness, rather than day 8, if you have COVID-19 or are advised to stay at home.

Employment and Support Allowance - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-style-employment-and-support-allowance>

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.

From 6 April we are increasing the standard allowance in Universal Credit and the basic element in Working Tax Credit for 1 year. Both will increase by £20 per week on top of planned annual uprating. This will apply to all new and existing Universal Credit claimants and to existing Working Tax Credit claimants.

❖ **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.

<https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

From April, Local Housing Allowance rates will be increasing to the 30th percentile of market rents. This applies to all private renters who are new or existing Universal Credit housing element claimants and to existing Housing Benefit claimants.