

****This information is correct as of 18/03/2020. As with all Coronavirus Updates, the official guidance changes regularly so it is important to check government sources regularly ****

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>



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BENEFIT ARRANGEMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT ADVICE



If you are an existing benefit claimant, special arrangements have been made for people who are self-isolating due to showing Covid-19 symptoms, or are classed as 'at risk'. This will involve not attending medical assessments or Jobcentre appointments.

Medical Assessments have been suspended for most claimants, and where feasible, desktop assessments based on information based on your ESA/UC/PIP form. Any decision made in relation to your fitness for work can still be challenged through mandatory reconsideration/appeals.

Your benefits will continue to be paid as normal while you are waiting on your medical assessment/decision.

If you have to claim ESA or UC due to not being able to work due to self-isolation, the DWP will not expect you to hand in sick-lines.

If you have been asked to attend a meeting/assessment, and you are self-isolating, it is important that you let the DWP know **as soon as possible**. If you don't turn up to an appointment without letting the DWP know, you may face **sanctions**.

If you have had to self-isolate due to covid-19, and you have notified the DWP, your commitments/work search requirements etc can be suspended during the time you are off sick.

If you have had a down-turn in work, and have to make a **new claim** for UC or ESA due to the coronavirus, the government have stated that the usual 7-day waiting period will be suspended, so you can be paid your benefits from day one.

If you have claimed UC, you will not need to attend the Jobcentre and you can request a **benefit advance** (which is an interest-free loan which is repayable) should you be self-isolating.

If you are employed or self-employed, the government has made changes to Universal Credit and Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for those who may have to self-isolate due to Covid-19.

This includes:

- From 13/03/2020, 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
- **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