

Coronavirus and claiming benefits

This page provides information about coronavirus and claiming benefits. It will continue to be updated. Please check this page regularly for updates on the arrangements the Department for Work and Pensions is making to support those who are affected by coronavirus.

For health information and advice see the [NHS pages on coronavirus](#)

Learn more about the [government response to coronavirus](#)

If you're in work and not claiming benefits

If you cannot work due to coronavirus and are eligible for [Statutory Sick Pay](#) you will get it from day one, rather than from the fourth day of your illness. DWP intends to legislate so this measure applies retrospectively from 13 March 2020.

Statutory Sick Pay will be payable if you are staying at home on Government advice, not just if you are infected by coronavirus. This will apply from 13 March 2020.

If you are a gig worker and/or on a zero hours contract, you may be entitled to sick pay. Check your [eligibility for Statutory Sick Pay](#)

If you need to provide evidence to your employer that you need to stay at home due to coronavirus, you will soon be able to get it from NHS 111 Online instead of having to get a Fit Note from your doctor. This is currently under development and will be available soon.

If you are not eligible to receive sick pay you can [apply for Universal Credit](#) and/or [apply for New Style Employment and Support Allowance](#)

You can also apply for these if you are prevented from working because of a risk to public health.

If you're already claiming benefits

In light of the current coronavirus outbreak, the Department for Work and Pensions has taken the precautionary decision to temporarily suspend all face-to-face assessments for health and disability-related benefits. This is aimed at reducing the risk of exposure to coronavirus and safeguarding the health of individuals claiming health and disability benefits, many of whom are likely to be at greater risk due to their pre-existing health conditions.

If you already have an assessment appointment arranged, you do not need to attend. Your assessment provider will contact you to discuss your appointment and explain the next steps to you.

If you have made a claim for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Universal Credit or Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) but do not have a date for an assessment appointment, you do not need to do anything. You will be contacted shortly by telephone or letter to let you know what will happen next.

If you are already receiving PIP, ESA, Universal Credit or IIDB you will continue to receive your current payments as normal.

If you have made a new claim or wish to make a new claim, DWP will continue to take claims for all benefits.

Read the current [NHS guidelines on coronavirus](#), including advice on those who should stay at home.

If you have a jobcentre appointment but are staying at home on Government advice or have been diagnosed with coronavirus, you will not be sanctioned if you tell DWP in good time. If you have a [Claimant Commitment](#), it will be reviewed to make sure it is still reasonable.

If you are staying at home as a result of coronavirus, your mandatory work search and work availability requirements will be removed to account for a period of sickness.

If you're already claiming Universal Credit and think you may have been affected by coronavirus, please contact your work coach as soon as possible. You can do this by:

- using your [online journal](#), or
- calling the Universal Credit [helpline](#)

If you are in work and already claiming Universal Credit, and are staying at home on Government advice, you should report this in the usual way via your [online journal](#). If this means you are working fewer hours, the amount of Universal Credit you receive will adjust as your earnings change.

If you are self-employed and claiming Universal Credit, and are required to stay at home or are ill as a result of coronavirus, the [Minimum Income Floor](#) (an assumed level of income) will not be applied for a period of time whilst you are affected.

Jobcentre Plus staff are ready to support you if you are required to stay at home.

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 need to make an appointment, call the number you are given when you submit your claim, and explain the situation. Jobcentre Plus staff are ready to support you if you are required to stay at home.

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.

For more information about any aspect of Universal Credit, including how to make a claim, visit the [homepage](#) or use the links at the top of this page.

If you have been working within the last 2 to 3 years and have paid and/or been credited with enough National Insurance contributions, you may be able to claim [New Style Jobseeker's Allowance \(JSA\)](#)

New Style JSA can be claimed on its own or at the same time as Universal Credit. Your savings and capital (or your partner's savings, capital and income) are not taken into account when claiming New Style JSA.

If you're an employer

If you employ people, you are urged to use your discretion about what evidence, if any, you ask for when making decisions about sick pay.

If you have fewer than 250 employees, you 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](#) affected by coronavirus