

## **Changes to social security arrangements as a result of Coronavirus/COVID-19**

**Updated 25 June 2021**

This page sets out the current arrangements and changes to social security arrangements in the Isle of Man.

In some cases they override information given on the main gov.im webpages for a particular benefit.

### **Social security offices**

Our offices are open to the public at the following times:-

- Markwell House, Market Street, Douglas IM1 2RZ –Monday to Friday from 9 am to 1 pm
- Town Hall, Parliament Street, Ramsey IM8 1RT – Based on the Ground floor and open on Tuesday and Thursday from 9.15am to 1pm and from 1.45pm to 4.30pm

Please don't call at a social security office if you have been advised or instructed to self-isolate. Either phone or email us for advice.

Please note that neither of our offices are open to the public during lockdowns or circuit breaker lockdowns.

### **Incapacity benefits and medical certificates**

If you're isolating under the direction of Public Health you can self-certify your incapacity for work for up to 21 days.

If you're not able to return to work after 21 days you'll need to provide us with a sick note from a doctor.

Your claim for Incapacity Benefit (and income support, if you're awarded income support on the basis that you're sick) will end as soon as you no longer need to isolate, unless you're unable to work because you have an ongoing medical condition.

You must tell us as soon as you've been told that you no longer need to isolate, which may be sooner than 21 days from when you started isolating.

If you still need financial help after that you may be able to get other benefits, such as income support or jobseeker's allowance.

If you self-certify your incapacity for work for up to 21 days, then go back to work, but then fall ill or have to isolate again within the following 8 weeks you cannot self-certify your incapacity again – you'll need to provide us with a sick note from a doctor.

Payment of an award of Incapacity Benefit is not usually made for the first 3 days – these are known as "waiting days". However, waiting days don't currently apply to new awards of Incapacity Benefit. Instead benefit is awarded from the first day of incapacity. This applies in all cases, not just those related to coronavirus.

Please note that **public servants** who receive full pay from their employer whilst off work are not eligible to claim Incapacity Benefit.

<https://www.gov.im/categories/benefits-and-financial-support/illness-and-disabilities/incapacity-benefit/>

Contact Incapacity Benefits Team – [incapacityBenefits@gov.im](mailto:incapacityBenefits@gov.im)

Tel 685108, 685109 or 685181

### **Coronavirus Support Payment for certain care workers**

This payment is available to care workers who –

- are employed at an adult care home, an adult day care centre, a children’s home, a child secure accommodation establishment or by a domiciliary care agency;
- have been advised or instructed to self-isolate; and
- aren’t eligible for sick pay from their employer for the period they’re self-isolating.

To be entitled a person must –

- be at least 18 years old, but below state pension age;
- be present and ordinarily resident in the Island, and have been ordinarily resident in the Island for at least 13 of the 26 weeks immediately before the date of their claim; and
- have been in employed earner’s employment for at least 13 of the 26 weeks immediately before the date of their claim, earning on average at least £150 per week.

Also, they must not-

- be entitled to certain other social security benefits (for example, maternity allowance, adoption allowance or paternity allowance) for the period they’re self-isolating; or
- have returned to the Island from elsewhere at any point in the 4 weeks immediately preceding the date of their claim.

The Coronavirus Support Payment (or “CSP”) is paid at the weekly rate of £150 and can be paid for up to 14 days in any single period of isolation.

No medical evidence is required, but you’ll have to make a self-declaration about your self-isolation and absence from work.

If you meet the above conditions and you don’t qualify for MERA you should claim a Coronavirus Support Payment instead of Incapacity Benefit.

If you need extra help with housing and general living costs you may also be able to get Income Support.

Contact Incapacity Benefits Team – [IncapacityBenefits@gov.im](mailto:IncapacityBenefits@gov.im)

Tel 685108, 685109 or 685181

## **Jobseeker's Allowance**

If you want to make a new claim for jobseeker's allowance please visit a social security office as soon as possible. If you wait you may lose money you might otherwise have been entitled to.

Please don't call at a social security office if you have been advised or instructed to self-isolate. Phone or email us instead.

If you're fit for work and aren't self-isolating, but are prevented from attending your normal place of work for other reasons and as a result have no earnings, you should be able to claim Jobseeker's Allowance.

Payment of an award of Jobseeker's Allowance is not usually made for the first 3 days – these are known as "waiting days". However waiting days don't currently apply to new awards of Jobseeker's Allowance - benefit will usually be paid from the first day of claim (but see below if you have been laid off from work). This will apply in all cases, not just those related to coronavirus.

If you've been temporarily laid off from your employment (as opposed to being made redundant) your last earnings from your employer will determine when you can be awarded Jobseeker's Allowance from. If you were receiving a monthly salary it may be a few weeks before you can get Jobseeker's Allowance.

If you have an ongoing claim for Jobseeker's Allowance currently you don't have to "sign on" each fortnight at a social security office to maintain your entitlement. Payments of Jobseeker's Allowance will continue to be made to you. However, this situation may change in the future and we will contact you directly if it does.

You must get in touch with the Jobseeker's Allowance Team straightaway if there are any changes in your circumstances, including whether you get any work. And you should keep a record of your job search activity in case it is requested in future.

<https://www.gov.im/categories/benefits-and-financial-support/employment-work-related/jobseekers-allowance/>

Contact JSA Team - JSA@gov.im

Tel 685126

## **Income support**

If you want to make a new claim for income support please get in touch with us as soon as possible. If you wait you may lose money you might otherwise have been entitled to. You can call us, email us or visit a social security office.

But please don't call at a social security office if you have been advised or instructed to self-isolate - phone or email us instead.

Changes relating to lone parents claiming income support which were due to come into effect from 8 April 2021 will not now happen until 7 April 2022. Currently a lone parent can claim income support if they have at least one child under 12 years of age. It had been intended that from 8 April 2021 only lone parents who have a child under 6 years of age

would be able to claim income support solely on the basis that they are a lone parent. However, that will not now happen until 7 April 2022, So, for the time being lone parents who aren't working, or who work for less than 16 hours a week, and who have at least one child under 12 will be able to claim income support.

<https://www.gov.im/categories/benefits-and-financial-support/illness-and-disabilities/income-support/>

Contact Income Support Team – [incomesupport@gov.im](mailto:incomesupport@gov.im)

Tel 685094

### **Employed Person's Allowance (EPA)**

New minimum work requirements for EPA were due to be introduced from 20 April 2021.

However, they have been postponed and won't now come into effect until 19 April 2022.

Until then the existing rules will continue to apply.

<https://www.gov.im/categories/benefits-and-financial-support/employment-work-related/employed-persons-allowance/>

Contact EPA Team - [EPA@gov.im](mailto:EPA@gov.im)

Tel 685092

### **Payments of benefits and state pensions by MiCard**

If you are concerned about your ability to collect your pension or benefits at a Post Office using a MiCard you can either nominate someone else to do so on your behalf or you can choose to have them paid directly into your bank account instead.

Get in touch with Social Security on **685656** if you want to make any changes.

### **Making claims for benefits**

If you need a benefit claim form either:

- visit a social security office (but please don't call at a social security office if you have been advised or instructed to self-isolate - either phone or email us for advice,
- visit our website at [www.gov.im/socialsecurity](http://www.gov.im/socialsecurity) where you can download a claim form for printing at home, or
- email us at [socialsecurity@gov.im](mailto:socialsecurity@gov.im) or call us on 685656 and we'll send you a claim form and prepaid return envelope.

If you're able to, you can scan your completed claim form and any supporting documentation required (for example, payslips, bank account statements/print-outs, tenancy agreement) and email it to the relevant benefit section at:

[EPA@gov.im](mailto:EPA@gov.im)

[JSA@gov.im](mailto:JSA@gov.im)

[incomesupport@gov.im](mailto:incomesupport@gov.im)

[incapacityBenefits@gov.im](mailto:incapacityBenefits@gov.im)

If you can't do that (or you'd just prefer), take or send it to a social security office.

### **Home visits**

We may be able to visit you in your home if you're unable to call at a social security office and we're unable to help you over the phone or by email.