

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

Updated 26 November 2021

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

The information provided in this notice may override or supplement information given on the www.gov.im/categories/benefits-and-financial-support/ webpages.

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 - open each Tuesday from 9.15am to 1pm and from 1.45pm to 4.30pm

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

Incapacity benefits and medical certificates

If you're unable to work because you're having to isolate, or if you're looking after child who lives with you because they're isolating, you can be treated as if you're incapacitated for work for up to 14 days. During this period you may be eligible for incapacity benefit. You may also be eligible for income support depending on your circumstances and means.

Your claim for incapacity benefit (and income support) 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 14 days from when you started isolating.

If you have to isolate for more than 14 days you'll need to provide us with a sick note from a doctor if you want to continue claiming incapacity benefit (and income support).

If you're unable to work because you're ill or have suffered an injury you can self-certify your incapacity for work for up to 21 days. If your incapacity for work lasts for more than 21 days 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 - benefit will usually be paid from the first day of your claim. This applies in all cases, not just those related to coronavirus.

Please note that **Government employees** 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 the Incapacity Benefits Team – 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 incapacity benefit, or you do qualify for incapacity benefit but it is worth less than £150 a week, you should claim a coronavirus support payment.

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

Contact the Incapacity Benefits Team – Incapacitybenefits@gov.im

Tel 685108, 685109 or 685181

Jobseeker's Allowance

If you want to make a new claim for jobseeker's allowance (JSA) 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 may be eligible for 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 your 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.

Currently if you have an ongoing claim for jobseeker's allowance 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. Normally, to be entitled to jobseeker's allowance you must be taking steps in each week to look for work or to improve your prospects of getting a job. You should keep a record of what steps you've taken as we may ask you to show us what you've done.

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

Contact the 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.

Currently a lone parent can claim income support if they have a child under 12 years of age solely on the basis that they are a lone parent. However, from 7 April 2022 only lone parents who have a child under 6 years of age will be able to do so.

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

Contact the Income Support Team – incomesupport@gov.im

Tel 685094

Employed Person's Allowance (EPA)

New minimum work requirements for certain groups of people were due to be introduced from 20 April 2021.

However, their introduction has been postponed and won't now come into effect until 18 October 2022 (subject to Tynwald approval).

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

Tel 685092

Payments of benefits and state pensions by MiCard

If you're 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
- choose to have payments made directly into your bank account instead.

Get in touch with us 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),
- email us at socialsecurity@gov.im or call us on 685656 and we'll send you a claim form and a 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
- JSA@gov.im
- incomesupport@gov.im
- 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.

Please don't ask us to visit you in your home if you have been advised or instructed to self-isolate. Either phone or email us for advice.