

FINANCIAL ADVICE FOR FAMILIES

DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



Families will have many concerns during this worrying time, primarily to do with health, but also because of the impact on finances and spending. We have put together this guide to what help may be available if you are struggling financially. Please speak to our Office Team if you would like to discuss anything in more detail: 0114 234 1379.

EMPLOYED

SICK PAY

If you are unable to work (and usually earn £120+/week) as you are self-isolating, you are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay from day one of your absence. This is £95.85 per week. However, the government has suggested that it is "good practice" for your employer to stick to their usual sick pay policy as outlined in your contract. If you are unwell with coronavirus, you should get your usual sick leave/pay entitlement.

FURLOUGH

If you are unable to work because you don't have a job to do (e.g. hospitality roles), or you are self-isolating and can't do your job from home, your employer can put you on 'furlough'. The government will then pay 80% of your wage and it is up to your employer whether they contribute the other 20%. This can be backdated until the 1st March 2020.

If you recently left a job for a new one, you may be able to ask your last employer to re-hire you to furlough you. If you are on a Zero-Hours contract and paid with PAYE, it may be possible for your employer to furlough you. The amount you get might be based on your average weekly salary.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

If you have been with your employer for over 26 weeks, you are entitled to flexible working. This may mean that you reduce or change your working hours or that you work from home.

PARENTAL LEAVE

It is your legal right to take time off to care for your children, but your employer does not have to pay you during this time. You can take it as unpaid leave (usually up to 4 weeks although there is no official limit) or holiday.

MEDICAL EVIDENCE

Employers should use their discretion when asking for evidence. As usual, it should only be asked for after 7 days absence. You can get isolation notes from [nhs 111 online](#).

SELF-EMPLOYED

SICK PAY

Self-employed people are not entitled to Statutory Sick Pay, but may be entitled to claim certain benefits. For example, Universal Credit for self-employed people or a Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant.

SELF-ASSESSMENT TAX

The government has delayed payments so you will not need to pay anything in July if you usually do. If you have a business or are self-employed and are concerned about not being able to pay your tax, please call: **0800 015 9559**

INCOME SUPPORT SCHEME

The government will pay 80% of your average monthly profit, up to £2500 per month, which will be calculated using your tax returns from the last 1-3 years (depending on what is available). Grants will be paid in 2 lump sum instalments each covering a 3-month period. The first grant will cover 1st November 2020 – 31st January 2021 and will be capped at £7,500. The second grant covers 1st February 2021 – 30th April 2021, the level of which is yet to be set.

USEFUL LINKS

[https://
www.understandinguniversalcre
dit.gov.uk/employment-and-
benefits-support/](https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/)

[https://
www.moneysavingexpert.com/
news/2020/03/uk-coronavirus-
help-and-your-rights/](https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/uk-coronavirus-help-and-your-rights/)

[https://
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/)

Required to work from home (even for one day) since 6th April 2020? You can claim tax relief for the whole year worth £60 or £125. See www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home

for more details.



DEBT AND SPENDING

Although there may be added financial pressure during this time, there are things which can be done to alleviate some of it. For example, cancelling/pausing subscriptions you are not currently using (e.g. gym, cinema, kids' activities) and getting refunds for cancelled events. Please avoid using your overdraft when possible as fees on most accounts are due to go up to 40% APR in April.

CREDIT CARDS/LOANS

If you are struggling, you may be able to get repayment holiday or credit increase. Speak to your lender.

RENT

Speak to your landlord as soon as possible if you are worried about paying your rent. Find out if you can get help to pay your rent through Universal Credit/Housing Benefit; the Local Housing Allowance has gone up which may help you. Landlords are being given a payment holiday on buy-to-let mortgages so they may pass this on if you can agree an affordable repayment plan for when your income goes back to normal.

MORTGAGE

'Payment holidays' have been extended up to a maximum total of six months. You will need to prove that your finances are being impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic and be up to date with payments. For more information on whether this is right for you, see [mse blog](#)

UTILITIES

You may be able to delay your energy bills, so please speak to your provider if you are struggling and please try not to worry, your supply will not be cut off during this time. For people with pre-payment meters, there is support. You may be able to nominate someone else to top-up for you, get emergency credit added to your meter, or discretionary credit. Please ask your provider as soon as possible if you are in need of help.

BENEFITS

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The Universal Credit allowance has been increased by £1000/year (£20/week) for the next 12 months. This is for all new and existing claims. The amount you can get is dependent on factors such as earnings, children and savings.

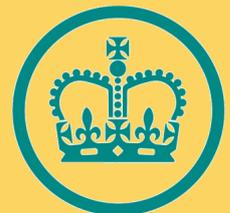
to apply, go to www.gov.uk/appl-universal-credit or call 0800 328 5644



TAX CREDITS

The Working Tax Credit allowance has also been increased by £1000/year (£20/week) for the next 12 months. For most people, tax credits have been replaced by Universal Credit but if you do already receive them, update your details online or by phone if your hours have changed:

www.access.service.gov.uk/login/signin/creds / 0345 300 3900



ESA

If you are self-employed and think you may be entitled to ESA, please contact the Job Centre: 0800 055 6688

to find out what you might be entitled to, please use an online benefits checker:

moneysavingexpert.entitledto.co.uk/home/start