



## ***News in Brief***

Welcome to another edition of News in Brief. As lockdown begins to lift and the rain inevitably sets in, we take a look at the latest developments and news.

### **Personal Independence Payment and Work Capability Assessment phone assessments**

Although the suspension of all face to face assessments for Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment is necessary to protect all parties involved, it has raised some logistical problems. Assessments can now be carried out over the phone where enough evidence has been gathered, but this is causing further problems for claimants who find phone assessments difficult or impossible due to their particular difficulties.

We have received information from a local partnership manager that the internal guidance includes information on what to do in these circumstances.

'We are very aware that for some claimants, particularly those with certain health conditions or disabilities, it may be difficult or impossible to carry out assessments over the phone. Claimants can have someone with them to help them. This can be a friend, family member, carer or support worker. If the companion cannot be with them in person, the assessment provider can add them to the telephone call.'

### **DWP safeguarding leaders roles**

The DWP has introduced ten regional Senior Safeguarding Leader roles in response to the pandemic. They are to be used in exceptional circumstances where normal escalation has not been successful.

The contact details are for the use of stakeholders only and are not to be shared with claimants. The contact details for the North East safeguarding lead are as follows:

Phil Adams [phil.adams@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:phil.adams@dwp.gov.uk)

Keighley 01535 617563, 07917 244139

For more information, see the [DWP Touchbase Coronavirus special](#)

## **Treatment of coronavirus scheme payments for Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance**

DWP have confirmed how payments from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-employment Income Support Scheme will be considered for Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance.

### **Jobseeker's Allowance**

You can claim Jobseeker's Allowance if you are on furlough or receive a grant through the Self-employment Income Support Scheme and both the following apply:

- you usually work less than 16 hours a week
- you meet the other eligibility requirements for Jobseeker's Allowance

Furlough pay will be considered as part-time earnings and assessed in the normal way.

Payment from the Self-employment Income Support Scheme will be treated as part-time earnings and will be brought to account for the period covered by the payment (along with any other earnings for the same period) to provide average weekly earnings.

### **Employment and Support Allowance**

If you are not currently working, any furlough pay will not affect entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance. If you are working under permitted work rules, then any furlough pay is considered as earnings and taken into account under the normal rules.

Payment from the Self-employment Income Support Scheme will not affect entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance, however, decision makers will 'continue to follow the guidance provided in ADM Chapter V3 for self-employed claimants engaged in [permitted work]'.

ADM Memo 08/20 is available from:

[assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/890799/adm8-20.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/890799/adm8-20.pdf)

## **New appeal form for Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance appeals**

There is now a new appeal form, SSCS1PE, for Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance appeals. This new form is replacing the SSCS1 form.

The new form mirrors the sequence of screens seen in the online Submit Your Appeal Service and is being introduced to align with the new bulk scanning service which will scan the form and create an electronic copy of it for the digital case file. The new form also has a new return address which directs the form to our bulk scanning supplier.

Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance appeals submitted on an old-style SSCS1 will still be admissible, but they may take slightly

longer to progress through the registration stage of the appeal journey as the appeal will need to be sent from HMCTS to the scanning supplier instead of arriving there directly. As now, appeals submitted in paper form will also still require inclusion of the mandatory reconsideration notice (MRN).

The new form is available now, you can begin to use it straight away and advise your clients to do this too. You can find a copy of the new form here: [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/873089/sscs1-pe-eng.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/873089/sscs1-pe-eng.pdf)

### **Video Relay Service expanded**

The Video Relay Service has now been rolled out to Jobseeker's Allowance and Income Support. This service allows customers to make an inbound call to DWP via a British Sign Language interpreter using a video connection. The service will be rolled out to more service lines later in June.

### **Parents returning to work after extended leave eligible for furlough**

Although the deadline to furlough staff for the first time passed on 10 June, the government has now confirmed that parents on statutory parental leave who return to work in the coming months after a long period of absence will be permitted to be furloughed.

This will only apply where they work for an employer who has previously furloughed employees.

For more information, visit [www.gov.uk/government/news/parents-returning-to-work-after-extended-leave-eligible-for-furlough](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/parents-returning-to-work-after-extended-leave-eligible-for-furlough)

### **Research participants needed "Welfare at a Social Distance" project**

Salford University working with University of Leeds, LSE and the University of Kent are carrying out research to explore how the benefits system nationally has responded to Covid-19.

The "Welfare at a Social Distance project" funding has been agreed on the basis that the research team rapidly share their findings with policy and practice stakeholders. They are looking for potential participants to interview – **participants will receive a £20 voucher per 1 hour interview.**

Please pass on the information from the link below to any benefit claimants you know who may be interested in participating.

Dr Kate Summers at LSE is leading on participation and can answer any questions: [k.summers@lse.ac.uk](mailto:k.summers@lse.ac.uk)

For more information, visit <https://nawra.us16.list-manage.com/track/click?u=decb9d1f0c8e0b61fc8eae4c9&id=6663cf7098&e=7a30946305>



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