

**19 March 2020**

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) update for parents and carers in receipt of direct payments**

Due to the current situation, we felt it may be helpful if we provide some information on direct payments.

The usual four weekly payments will continue to be made to the designated DP bank account. The next payment will be made on 09.04.2020.

If you are not using your direct payment funds because your assistant is not providing the support we will not stop the regular payments, unless of course, you have asked us to do this.

If you wish to return unused or surplus direct payment funds, please contact your Personalisation Support Adviser for details on how to do this. Do make sure that you are using the contingency amount (eight weeks) for support if this is needed.

If your assistant is not able to provide support, please contact your Social Worker or Disabled Children's Family Worker to discuss with them how best the funds can be used to provide support. Each case will be looked at individually.

During this time, we want to support you to use the direct payments flexibly and creatively, trying to ensure that your family is receiving the most appropriate support that is available to you at this time.

Where direct payment home visits have been arranged, your Personalisation Support Worker will ring you to check if you would like this to go ahead, or if you would prefer a telephone conversation. Where you would like a visit to go ahead, please let them know if your child or someone in the family is showing symptoms.

These include:

a high temperature – your child or you feel hot to touch on your chest or back  
a new, continuous cough – your child or you have started coughing repeatedly

If your child, someone in your family, your Personalisation Support Advisor or a member of their family have any of these symptoms the visit will be postponed.

If a review is due and you do not want visits at the moment we will work with you to identify how best to support you, this could be via phone calls or skype. If you are the employer of personal assistants, please see information below:

Self-isolating employees are legally defined as being unfit to attend work. They should, therefore, notify you of their intention to self-isolate in accordance with your sickness and absence procedures.

They have the right to remain away from work for 14 days from the symptoms becoming known. You can find detailed Government guidance on staying at home due to a possible Coronavirus infection at [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

As the employee is considered to be unfit for work, they are entitled to statutory sick pay (if eligible) from day one of the absence. Employees and workers must receive any Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) due to them if they need to self-isolate because of coronavirus.

Statutory sick pay is payable to employees who:

- are employees or workers (includes zero hours and casual workers) and have earned on average £118 per week over the last 8 weeks, and
- have given you the correct notice.

If the employee is not eligible you must provide them with the SSP1 form to explain why which will allow them to present a claim for possible benefits. You can find the full eligibility for SSP at [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Statutory sick pay is paid at a rate of £94.25 per week, rising to £95.85 from 6th April 2020.

Agency, casual and zero-hours workers can get SSP if they meet the eligibility conditions.

The Government have announced that they will repay payments of SSP, up to 14 days, for each employee. There is further detailed information at [Gov.uk sick pay](#) pages

Unless the employee has a zero-hours contract, if they are not sick but you have asked them not to come to work, they should get their usual pay.

In normal cases of sickness absence, you can ask the employee for a medical certificate, after the first seven days of absence. Under circumstances of self-isolation however, it is not advisable that you press for such evidence as the current guideline to self-isolating employees is that they are not to go to the GP. It would also be impossible for you to demand evidence of another householder's private medical affairs where someone else is the reason your employee is self-isolating.

It is clear that this is a fast-moving situation, so we will be updating our direct payment web pages with further information as and when necessary.

If you wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact your Personalisation Support Advisor or your insurance company who are also sending information to families.