

Summary of Welfare Benefit Related Measures

General

- New Job Retention Scheme that will provide a grant to employers to enable them to pay the wages of their workforce who remain on payroll but are temporarily not working during the coronavirus outbreak. See next page for more information
- All requirements to attend the JobCentre in person are suspended for at least 3 months, starting from Thursday 19th March 2020
- JobCentres remain open, and will continue to support people who need it.

Statutory Sick Pay

- Payable from day 1 of sickness (rather than day 4)
- As getting a fit note could be problematic, employers are urged to use their discretion about what evidence, if any, they ask for
- A system is now in operation whereby claimants who need one can get an 'isolation note' from the NHS 111 Online service.

New-Style Employment and Support Allowance

- Payable from day 1 of sickness (rather than day 8)
- Not required to produce a 'fit note' or 'isolation note'.
- Treated as incapable for work

Universal Credit

- Standard Allowance increase by £20 a week for 12 months- the main purpose behind this appears to be to give self-employed claimants the same basic level of income as SSP.
- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) changes from 1st April – pay for at least 30% of market rates (We await further details but suspect this will mean a 're-set' of LHA rates, which have, in the main, been frozen since 2015. And it may include the lifting of the 'upper limit')
- Minimum Income Floor (MIF) suspended for everyone affected by the economic impacts of coronavirus
- Not be required to produce a 'fit note' or 'isolation note' if affected by Coronavirus.
- Those who have contracted Coronavirus or are self-isolating are treated as having a Limited Capability for Work (LCW):
 - mandatory work search and work availability requirements removed to account for a period of sickness
 - entitled to work allowance if treated as having LCW on date UC is assessed
- Claimants will not be required to attend the JobCentre
- Can receive Advance Payment without having to physically attend a JobCentre

Tax Credits

Standard rate to increase by £20 a week

Housing Benefit

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) changes from 1st April – same as those being made to UC.