



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Employment Affairs
and Social Protection

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Additional Customer Information



1) Who can qualify for Illness Benefit under COVID-19?

The COVID-19 Illness Benefit and related social welfare measures are designed for **workers and the self-employed** to minimise any disincentive that they might have against self-isolation.

People whose sole income is their Social Welfare payment should not apply as they will keep their existing payment.

Civil and public servants (including teachers, nurses, Gardaí) should not apply as they will continue to be covered by occupational sick pay.

2) What are employers expected to do?

The Government, trade union and employer representative bodies are urging all employers to support national public health objectives by continuing to pay workers who cannot attend work due to COVID-19 illness or certified self-isolation.

Employers should, if at all possible, continue to pay their staff so that they don't need to claim this enhanced Illness Benefit payment.

At a minimum it is expected that they pay them, if possible, at least the difference between the enhanced Illness Benefit rate and their normal wages.

3) How do I qualify for an enhanced Illness Benefit payment?

To qualify, you must:

- Be self-isolating on the medical instruction of a doctor or other medical professional and you must satisfy the conditions for self-isolation specified in public health advice; or
- Be diagnosed with COVID-19 by a doctor or other medical professional;
- In either case, your doctor must submit a medical cert confirming this;
- Be absent from work and confined to home or a treatment location;
- Not be performing any work;
- Have been in paid employment immediately prior to your claim; and
- Submit, on request, evidence of employment, earnings and absence from work.

4) Why must I self-isolate?

It is vital from a public health perspective that individuals who are told to self-isolate, confine themselves to their home or place of treatment. A failure to do so risks spreading the COVID-19 virus and places the rest of their community at risk.

5) How do I apply for an enhanced Illness Benefit payment?

Step 1

If you feel you may be suffering from a COVID-19 illness or may need to self-isolate, you should contact your doctor by telephone. As per HSE advice, do not attend the GP surgery in person.

If the doctor is satisfied that you have COVID-19 or that you should self-isolate, they will advise you accordingly.

The doctor will then complete a medical certificate on your behalf and send this directly to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

To receive a payment, you will need to provide your doctor with your;

- name;
- PPS Number;
- date of birth.

Step 2

You now need to complete an application form for Illness Benefit (Form IB 1).

There are three ways that you can make an application:

- you can call 1890 800 024 to get an application form by post;

- organise someone to pick up a form at your doctor's surgery or at your local Intreo Centre;
- an online application process will be available by the end of March.

As per HSE advice, do not attend the Intreo Centre or the GP surgery in person.

Please arrange to send your application form by Freepost to Social Welfare Services, PO Box 1650, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Dublin 1.

Once both the application form and the medical certificate are received, payment will be processed.

6) How much will I be paid?

The enhanced Illness Benefit payment for a single person is €305 per week. It is paid from the first day of medical certification (no waiting days). This enhanced rate is effective from 9 March 2020. Additional payments are made for any people who are dependent on the person to whom Illness Benefit is paid.

An additional €134.70 per week is paid in respect of each adult dependent, while the increase for each dependent child under age 12 is €36.00 per week. This increases to €40.00 per week for each dependent child over age 12.

7) I'm currently getting another weekly Social Welfare payment. Do I need to apply for Illness Benefit if I am asked to self-isolate or am diagnosed with COVID-19?

The enhanced payment is a payment for workers in order to minimise any financial disincentive to taking time off work in order to self-isolate. People whose sole income is a social welfare payment will continue to receive their existing payment in the event that they are required to self-isolate or are diagnosed with COVID-19. This includes participants on Community Employment, TÚS and the Rural Social Scheme.

If your only income is a weekly Social Welfare payment, there is no need for you to take any action.

Workers whose income is a mixture of both earnings from employment and a social welfare payment (for example people who are in receipt of the Working Family Payment) can apply for the COVID-19 Illness Benefit payment should their employer no longer continue to pay them.

8) I usually collect my payment in the Post Office – now I'm not able to collect it as I've been diagnosed with COVID-19.

What can I do?

Payments to people who collect their payments in person at post offices but, due to illness or self-isolation, are unable to do so on the due date, will be held over until they can next attend a post office.

Alternative payment arrangements (e.g. transfer into a bank account) are also available and can be agreed, on request, with any person who is affected by COVID-19.

9) I need to take time off work to care for my elderly parents/children who are self-isolated. What supports are available to me?

Many employers can, and do, agree compassionate leave arrangements with staff who need to take short periods of time off to care for another person.

These include arrangements to enable employees to work remotely from home, to alter shift patterns, to work up time taken, to rearrange parental leave, or to bring forward annual leave entitlements from future work periods.

Where it is not possible to make appropriate compassionate leave arrangements, employees can call on some statutory entitlements.

An employee is entitled to paid leave, known as '**force majeure leave**' (which is a total of three days in a 12 month period or five days in a 36 month period), where they are urgently required to attend to the needs of a person who is affected by an illness or injury, including an actual or probable case of COVID-19.

In the exceptional circumstances of COVID-19, it is expected that employers will, if at all possible, facilitate people by allowing them to take the full 5 days entitlement in one block, as required.

Parents are entitled, with 6 weeks' notice, to take up to 22 weeks unpaid **parental leave** to care for each child up to 12 years of age (16 years of age in the case of a child with a

disability).

Parents are also entitled, with 6 weeks' notice, to take **parents leave** of 2 weeks for each child under 1 year old on or after the 1 November 2019. Parents taking parents leave are eligible to apply for [Parent's Benefit](#) from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Applications can be made online at www.mywelfare.ie or by post.

Employers are free to waive the 6 weeks' notice periods for parental/parents leave or to agree to provide paid leave as an alternative to parental/parents leave. Employers can also agree **alternative leave/absence arrangements**.

10) Although I have no symptoms and the public health advice is that I can continue to work, my employer has told me to self-isolate. I can't really afford to do that. What should I do?

Employers are requested to follow public health advice and should not ask staff to stay away from work except in accordance with this advice.

Where employers send staff home in circumstances where they are not advised to do so, it is expected that they will continue to pay staff as normal.

Any person, who is:

- not advised to self-isolate in accordance with the up-to-date guidelines of the HSE;
- but is requested to stay at home by their employer as a precaution against the spread of COVID-19;

will, in situations where the employer cannot continue to pay their wages;

- be considered to have been temporarily laid-off and can apply for an income support in the form of a [Jobseeker's Payment](#) or Supplementary Welfare Allowance.

11) I want to self-isolate, I have no symptoms but my colleague in work has symptoms and is self-isolating. Am I entitled to the Illness Benefit payment?

Please consult the HSE website for information and follow the public health advice from the HSE. If, having read this advice, you feel you may need to self-isolate, you should contact your doctor by telephone. If the doctor is satisfied that you should self-isolate, they will provide you with a medical certificate and you can claim the enhanced Illness Benefit from the Department.

12) I have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and my mortgage is €1,800 a month, even with the enhanced Illness Benefit rate, I will not be able to make this payment, is there any support for that please?

Banks and financial institutions have indicated that they will adopt a flexible approach with regard to mortgage and other payments due by people affected by COVID-19. In the first instance you should contact your bank and explain your position to them.

Advisors from the Money Advice and Budgeting Service of the Citizens Information Board may also be able to assist – more information available [here](#).

Workers, in receipt of the enhanced Illness Benefit payment who still face financial distress because their employer fails to pay sick pay beyond the level paid by the State, can apply for additional emergency income support, in the form of [Supplementary Welfare Allowance](#). This is based on a means test and an examination of expenditure by the person making the application.

Applications are usually made in person, when the person is no longer confined to their home. People who require immediate support can phone 1890 800 024 or 01 248 1398 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

13) Where can I get an application form for the enhanced Illness Benefit?

There are three ways that you can make an application:

- you can call 1890 800 024 to get an application form by post;
- organise someone to pick up a form at your doctor's surgery or at your [local Intreo Centre](#);
- an online application process will be available by the end of March.

Send your application form by Freepost to Social Welfare Services, PO Box 1650, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Dublin 1.

Once both the application form and the medical certificate are received, payment will be processed.

14) How will I be paid?

You will be paid directly to your current, deposit or savings account in a financial institution. Alternatively, you can arrange to have your payment made to your employer instead, if they continue to pay your wages.

15) I'm self-employed and I'm concerned about my business collapsing. What support can I get?

In the first instance, you should talk to your bank or financial institution as they have announced that they are putting arrangements in place to assist their clients affected by COVID-19.

The Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation has announced a number of measures to support businesses affected by COVID-19 – full information is available [here](#).

Where an employee or a self-employed person is medically required to self-isolate, or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, they can apply for the enhanced **Illness Benefit payment**.

Workers, in receipt of the enhanced Illness Benefit payment who still face financial distress can apply for additional emergency income support, in the form of [Supplementary Welfare Allowance](#) (based on a means test).

Applications are usually made in person, when the person is no longer confined to their home. People who require immediate support and have been told to self-isolate can phone 1890 800 024 or 01 248 1398 between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

16) I'm an Employer and I may have to let staff go on a temporary basis. What's there for my staff?

Employees who are laid off temporarily, without pay, due to a reduction in business activity, can apply for a [Jobseeker's Payment](#). This application can be made online at www.mywelfare.ie or in person at an [Intreo Centre](#).

17) I'm an Employer and I may have to reduce the number of days worked by my staff – what support can they get?

Employees who are put on short-time working by their employer due to a reduction in business activity related to COVID-19, may apply for a [Short-time Work Support](#) payment. This application can be made in person at an [Intreo Centre](#).

18) Where can I get more information?

You can access public health advice about COVID-19 (Coronavirus) at the [government's information page](#).

We recommend that you check this page and our [Twitter page](#) for regular updates.

Employment rights information is available from the [Workplace Relations Commission](#).

Illness Benefit for COVID-19 absences

If you are an employee or self-employed and feel you may have COVID-19, or may need to self-isolate as a result of COVID-19

Phone your GP and self-isolate

In line with public health advice from HSE

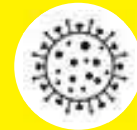


Don't Go In Person



If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 or are medically certified to self-isolate by a GP you can apply for Illness Benefit*

*To be eligible for this payment a person must be confined to their home or a medical facility



To get an Illness Benefit form phone us on 1890 800 024



Or get a friend or family member to collect one from your GP or Intreo Centre

Don't Go In Person



Send completed form to DEASP FREEPOST PO Box 1650

Your GP sends a medical cert to the Department



Your payment is processed



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