We know that the coronavirus (COVID-19) is affecting us all in many ways. The government has been making a variety of changes to the way it supports us all during the outbreak.

This is a very strange and unsettling time we are currently going through, and your Personal Advisor (PA) or Key Worker should be your first point of contact for support.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced a series of factsheets specifically for care leavers to provide information about the support that is currently available to you (links to the other guidance are provided below).

## Main things you need to know:

* The government’s new coronavirus (COVID-19) Self-Employment Income Support Scheme will allow you to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of your average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering 3 months, and capped at £7,500 altogether.
* If you receive the grant you can continue to work, start a new trade or take on other employment including voluntary work, or duties as an armed forces reservist.
* Before grant payments are made, if you are self-employed you will still be able to access other available government support if you are affected by coronavirus (COVID-19), including more generous universal credit, Employment Support Allowance and Business Continuity Loans where you have a business bank account.
* Income Tax payments due in July 2020 under the Self-Assessment system will be deferred to January 2021, so no penalties or interest for late payment will be charged in the deferral period. You must make your second payment on account on or before 31 January 2021 if you choose to defer.
* From 6 April the government increased the [standard allowance](https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/new-to-universal-credit/how-much-youll-get/#what-makes-up-your-payment) in Universal Credit and the basic element in [Working Tax Credit](https://www.gov.uk/working-tax-credit) for one year. Both have increase by £20 per week on top of planned annual uprating. This applies to all new and existing Universal Credit claimants and to existing Working Tax Credit claimants.

## Your questions answered:

**Q: What does all this mean?**

**A:** It means that if you are eligible to benefit from the new Self-Employed Income Support Scheme you will receive a taxable grant worth 80% of your average monthly trading profit over the last 3 years. This covers 95% of people who receive the majority of their income from self-employment.

**Q: What sort of jobs does this cover?**

**A:** We know that some of these jobs includes: Cleaners, Plumbers, Electricians, Musicians, Hairdressers, providing courier service, jobs found through websites or apps, provision of transport or food delivery service and freelancing platforms like Deliveroo, among many others.

**Q: Who can apply for this support?**

**A:** You can claim if you’re a self-employed individual or a member of a partnership and all of the following apply:

* you traded in the tax year 2018 to 2019 and submitted your Self Assessment tax return on or before 23 April 2020 for that year
* you traded in the tax year 2019 to 2020
* you intend to continue to trade in the tax year 2020 to 2021
* you carry on a trade which has been adversely affected by coronavirus

To note - your business could be adversely affected by coronavirus if, for example:

* you’re unable to work because you:
	+ are [shielding](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#what-is-shielding)
	+ are self-isolating
	+ are on sick leave because of coronavirus
	+ have caring responsibilities because of coronavirus
* you’ve had to scale down or temporarily stop trading because:
	+ your supply chain has been interrupted
	+ you have fewer or no customers or clients
	+ your staff are unable to come in to work

To work out your eligibility HMRC will first look at your 2018 to 2019 Self Assessment tax return. Your trading profits must be no more than £50,000 and at least equal to your non-trading income. If you’re not eligible based on the 2018 to 2019 Self Assessment tax return, HMRC will then look at the tax years 2016 to 2017, 2017 to 2018, and 2018 to 2019.

**Q: I am self-employed but I did not submit my Tax Self-Assessment tax return for the year 2018/2019. Can I still get this support?**

**A:** If you did not submit your Self Assessment tax return for the tax year 2018 to 2019 on or before 23 April 2020 you will not be able to claim. Claims based on late returns submitted between 26 March 2020 and 23 April 2020 will be subject to additional anti-fraud checks by HMRC.

When working out your eligibility or amount of the grant, HMRC will not take into account Self Assessment tax returns for the tax years 2016 to 2017 or 2017 to 2018 if they are submitted after 23 April 2020.

HMRC will use data on the tax returns already submitted to identify those eligible to claim. When working out your eligibility or amount of the grant, HMRC will not take into account any changes made to submitted returns after 6pm on 26 March 2020. HMRC will also only use the information in your original return if your tax return is under enquiry.

**Q: How can I apply for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme?**

**A:** You can check online if you are eligible to make a claim. To do this, you will need to have:

* Self Assessment Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR).
* National Insurance number

HMRC will tell you the date you’ll be able to make your claim from, and ask you to add your contact details.

If you can claim straightaway you’ll also need your:

* Government Gateway user ID and password - if you do not have a user ID, you can create one when you check your eligibility or make your claim
* UK bank details (only provide bank account details where a Bacs payment can be accepted) including:
	+ bank account number
	+ sort code
	+ name on the account
	+ your address linked to your bank account

You’ll have to confirm to HMRC that your business has been adversely affected by coronavirus.

**Q: If I am eligible, how will payments be made?**

**A:** You’ll get a taxable grant based on your average trading profit over the 3 tax years:

* 2016 to 2017
* 2017 to 2018
* 2018 to 2019

HMRC will work out your average trading profit by adding together your total trading profits or losses for the 3 tax years, then they will divide by 3.

The grant will be 80% of your average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering 3 months, and capped at £7,500 altogether. The online service will tell you how HMRC worked your grant out.

The grant amount HMRC work out for you will be paid directly into your bank account, in one instalment.

**Q: I am self-employed, what other support is available while I wait to hear if I am eligible for this scheme?**

**A:** Depending on individual circumstances you may be eligible for Universal Credit and/or new style Employment and Support Allowance.

* The government has ensured that benefits are easily accessible and more supportive for those who need to make a claim.
* They have also temporarily relaxed the Minimum Income Floor (MIF) for all self-employed Universal Credit claimants affected by COVID-19, for the duration of the outbreak.
* This means a drop in earnings due to sickness or self-isolation or as a result of the economic impact of the outbreak will be reflected in claimants’ awards. It ensures that the self-employed are supported by the benefit system so that they can follow Public Health England guidance on social distancing and self-isolation
* They will benefit from the changes, such as the £20 increase per week in the Universal Credit standard allowance (this will mean claimants will be up to £1040 a year better off) and the increases to the Local Housing Allowance.

For information on other help available visit [Self Employed](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-what-to-do-if-youre-self-employed-and-getting-less-work-or-no-work)

**Q: I am an employee; what support is available?**

**A:** You may be eligible for [Statutory Sick Pay](https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay). To qualify for SSP you must:

* be classed as an [employee](https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/employee) and have done some work for your employer
* earn an average of at least £120 per week
* have been ill, self-isolating or ‘shielding’ for at least 4 days in a row (including non-working days)

You may be eligible for SSP while you wait to hear if you are eligible for the scheme. How many days you can get SSP for depends on [why you’re off work.](https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay/what-youll-get) For more information visit [Statutory Sick Pay](https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay)

* You may be able to get Universal Credit and Statutory Sick Pay at the same time, so it may be a good idea to apply for both, particularly if you pay rent or have children to support. If you get both, your Statutory Sick Pay will be taken into account when calculating your Universal Credit payment.

For more information visit [Universal Credit](https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

**Q: If I cannot work due to coronavirus (COVID-19) will I be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay?**

**A:** [**Statutory Sick Pay**](https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay)is now payable from day 1 – as opposed to day 4 – where you cannot work due to coronavirus (COVID-19) because you are sick, self-isolating or shielding.

* If you are required to self-isolate because you, or someone in your household is displaying symptoms, of Coronavirus (COVID-19), and are unable to work as a result, you will be entitled to SSP. Other eligibility criteria will apply.
* Statutory Sick Pay is also available to you if you have been identified as extremely vulnerable and have been advised to stay at home (known as shielding). This could be because you received a letter from your doctor or have been contacted directly by your health service.

Other [eligibility criteria](https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay/eligibility) apply.

You will not qualify for Statutory Sick Pay if you:

* have received the maximum amount of SSP (28 weeks) per sickness absence
* are getting Statutory Maternity Pay

**Q: How much Statutory Sick Pay would I be entitled to?**

**A:** You can get £95.85 a week Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for up to 28 weeks (per sickness absence). SSP is paid by your employer in the same way as your normal wages, for example weekly or monthly. If you have regular periods of sickness, they may count as ‘linked’. To be ‘linked’, the periods must:

* last for 4 or more days each
* be 8 weeks or less apart

In any new period of sickness employees are eligible for 28 weeks of SSP.

* If you have more than one job you may get SSP from each employer.
* Tax and National Insurance will be deducted.

**Q: What if I am NOT eligible for Statutory Sick Pay?**

Many of those earning below £120 per week, who are not eligible for SSP, are already in receipt of benefits. For those on Universal Credit, their award will rise if their income falls.

Those who are not already in receipt of benefits may claim Universal Credit and/or new style Employment and Support Allowance, depending on their individual circumstances.

People receiving benefits do not have to attend job centre appointments until further notice. In addition, the following has been suspended:

* Face-to-face assessments for all sickness and disability benefits (including health checks for UC) for the next three months.
* JSA and New Style JSA signings.
* National Insurance Number Services.
* all routine face-to-face visits.

If you’re already claiming Universal Credit and think you may have been affected by coronavirus, please contact your work coach as soon as possible. You can do this using your [**online journal**](https://www.gov.uk/sign-in-universal-credit)**.**

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| Other sources of information available to you* [Information on what you need to do during coronavirus (COVID-19).](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)
* [Information and FAQs on the wide range of employment and benefits support available](https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/).
* [Guidance for tenants and landlords about renting and coronavirus (COVID-19).](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-and-renting-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities)
* [Guidance for local government on a range of issues during coronavirus (COVID-19).](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government#housing)
* The charity Shelter has [information on housing advice during coronavirus (COVID-19).](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/coronavirus#Rent_payment_problems)
* Citizens Advice [information and advice on coronavirus (COVID-19).](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you/)
* Money Advice Service [information and advice on paying your bills during coronavirus (COVID-19).](https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-and-your-bills)

We have published a number of other factsheets that outline further support available to you:* Factsheet for care leavers on Universal Credit during coronavirus (COVID-19)
* Factsheet for care leavers whose employers have stopped trading during coronavirus (COVID-19)
* Factsheet for care leavers who are university students during coronavirus (COVID-19) – to follow
* Factsheet for care leavers on housing during coronavirus (COVID-19)
* Factsheet for former Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) care leavers during coronavirus (COVID-19) – to follow
* Factsheet for care leavers who are young, single or expectant parents during coronavirus (COVID-19)
* Factsheet for care leavers on how to stay safe and maintain good emotional health and wellbeing during coronavirus (COVID-19)
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