

## Media Release

**Date: 20 March 2020**

### Financial support is available from Social Security

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Employment & Social Security is encouraging individuals to get in touch if they need financial support as a result of the far-reaching impacts of COVID-19.

As part of government's initial response, a hardship fund is available for people who may not otherwise qualify for unemployment benefit, sickness benefit or income support but who need an urgent payment to buy essential items such as food, toiletries, cleaning products, etc.

People of working age are asked to call **732516** if they need financial support because:

- they have been made redundant,
- they are in employment or self-employment but have severely reduced household income, for example as a result of reduced working hours or rates of pay,
- they are unable to work because they are sick or have been required to stay at home in self-isolation in line with public health guidance and they are unable to work from home,
- they are unable to work because they are caring for a dependent child who cannot attend their school, college, preschool, day nursery or childminder, or if their normal informal childcare arrangement (e.g. grandparents looking after grandchildren) is no longer appropriate.

Benefit claims will be taken over the phone. People will be asked for information about their circumstances to find out which benefit or benefits they qualify for. Callers are asked to have details of their household income and bank account to hand as this will help to speed up the application process.

This line will be manned on Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 March from 10:00 until 14:00. Normal office hours will apply from Monday 23 March.

If you can't get through on **732516**, please send an email, including your name and contact telephone number, to [hardshipfund@gov.gg](mailto:hardshipfund@gov.gg) and someone will call you back as soon as

possible. If you can't use the telephone, please ask a family member, friend or colleague to call on your behalf or alternatively email [hardshipfund@gov.gg](mailto:hardshipfund@gov.gg).

People are strongly discouraged from going to Edward T Wheadon House, in line with public health guidance regarding social distancing.

Deputy Michelle Le Clerc said:

"I'd like to encourage people to contact us if they need financial support to see them through this difficult time.

A hardship fund has been set up for people who need money urgently to pay for essential supplies and who aren't assisted by our normal range of benefits. Please don't suffer in silence - we're here to help.

We're expecting considerable extra demand for our various benefits over the coming weeks and months. That's only to be expected and we will be reprioritising staff resources to where they're most needed.

As things are evolving rapidly we'll keep the situation under review and make any necessary changes in light of experience."

To ensure ESS can handle your enquiry in an efficient way, please only call **732516** for new benefits inquiries relating to sickness, self-isolation, redundancy or severely reduced household income.

Usual published telephone number should be used for all other benefit inquiries.

For advice regarding employment law matters including pay and conditions, redundancy, etc, please email: [employmentrelations@gov.gg](mailto:employmentrelations@gov.gg).

If you have any clinical questions regarding COVID-19 please call 01481 756938 or 01481 756969 between 8am and 10pm daily.

Further information is available at [www.gov.gg/coronavirus](http://www.gov.gg/coronavirus). A wide range of general guidance documents are available at [www.gov.gg/covid19guidance](http://www.gov.gg/covid19guidance).

**Ends**

**Note for Editors**

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