

Media Release

Date: 23 February 2021

Payment may be available to essential workers who followed Public Health advice

Essential workers, who couldn't work from home, and were unable to attend work because they were following Public Health advice to self-isolate during the first few weeks of lockdown, may be eligible to receive a retrospective payment.

This follows a decision made by the Committee *for* Employment & Social Security last week to amend the legislation which sets out rules concerning entitlement to sickness benefit. The amendment means that an individual can be deemed to be incapable of work if the States Medical Officer of Health requests that they not attend their place of work if they might have been in contact with a case of infectious disease at a specified public gathering or place. An individual in these circumstances will be eligible to claim sickness benefit or an equivalent amount.

It is important to emphasise that some essential workers, who are now entitled to receive this payment, may have previously been told that they were not entitled to receive sickness benefit. This was the correct advice at the time, however, the position has now changed and these individuals are encouraged to contact the Sickness Benefit team by calling 01481 222507 or by emailing benefits@gov.gg.

This change only applies at present to those who voluntarily followed the advice of Public Health to self-isolate, following specific public events that they attended before lockdown. People who were subject to a 'Compulsory Self-Isolation Order' would have already qualified for sickness benefit if they were unable to work from home.

Deputy Peter Roffey, President of the Committee *for* Employment & Social Security, said:

"We're constantly having to adapt to the multifarious difficulties that this pandemic is creating, to ensure that there are no significant gaps in the support that the government provides. This amendment by the Committee, although technical in nature, is essential to ensure that individuals are not penalised for doing the right thing, which in this instance was observing the advice of Public Health. We will continue to monitor this ever-changing situation to ensure that individuals are given the support they need at this time."

Ends