

All Members of Parliament

13 March 2020

Dear Colleague,

### **Covid-19 Legislation: Extension of Statutory Sick Pay and Benefit Measures**

Yesterday, we laid regulations to give effect to some of the measures announced in Wednesday's Budget to help delay the spread of Covid-19 and ensure people are not penalised for doing the right thing. Taken together, they provide a boost of almost £0.5 billion to our welfare system. These come into effect today and will:

- extend SSP to those who are self-isolating in line with Government health guidance. (The Statutory Sick Pay (General) (Coronavirus Amendment) Regulations 2020)
- adjust the ESA and UC rules to ensure people are entitled to money from day 1 and we support self-employed people, including in the gig-economy, to receive welfare payments for periods of self-isolation. (The Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020).

This will provide certainty to eligible individuals that they will be entitled to receive Statutory Sick Pay if they are unable to work because they are following government advice in relation to Covid-19. This includes those who are self-isolating as a precautionary measure without symptoms. The SSP regulations are aligned with the new Government health guidance published today.

People on zero hour contracts may be eligible for SSP. That will depend on how many hours they have worked regularly and the income received but your constituents should contact their employer directly.

This legislation will also mean that people affected by Covid-19 who need financial help will be able to access the benefit system without the need to provide medical evidence or attend a work capability assessment. The seven waiting days for Employment and Support Allowance for new claimants suffering from coronavirus or required to self-isolate will not apply, so it will be payable from day one.

These regulations will also ensure that for those individuals affected by Covid-19, work search and work availability requirements within UC are switched off. They will also provide access to other support within UC, such as a work allowance and childcare support for those with partners who are still able to work. Affected self-employed claimants will also not have a Minimum Income Floor (an assumed level of income) applied for a period of time within Universal Credit.

The measure to enable SSP to be paid from day 1, rather than day 4 as now, will also come into effect today, 13th March. This will be legislated for in the coming emergency Bill, and retroactive to today's date.



**MATT HANCOCK MP**



**DR THERESE COFFEY MP**