

General Information	
Ministerial Decision Type	Miscellaneous
Report Title	Ending of Covid-19 Sickness (Isolation) Benefit
Minister	Social Security
Signatory	Minister
Lead Department	Customer and Local Services (CLS)
Lead Directorate	Customer Operations (CLS)
Ministerial Decision Summary: Public or <a href="#">Absolutely/Qualified</a> Exempt	Public Select if more than one Absolutely/Qualified Exemption.
Date decision made if different to date 'Ministerial Decision Summary' signed.	28/04/2022
Report and Supplemental Report Details	
Report Author	Senior Policy Officer
Date of Report	27/04/2022
Supplementary Report Title <i>(If applicable)</i>	Insert Supplementary Report Title.
Supplementary Report Author <i>(If applicable)</i>	Insert Official Title Only.
Date of Supplementary Report <i>(If applicable)</i>	Select Date of Supplemental Report.
Ministerial Decision Report: Public or <a href="#">Absolutely/Qualified</a> Exempt	Public Select if more than one Absolutely/Qualified Exemption.
Relevant Case/Application/URN <i>(Only complete if making a decision related to an appeal/case/application)</i>	Insert Relevant Case/Application.
Relevant Proposition Number <i>(Only complete if presenting Comments or if lodging an Amendment)</i>	Insert P. number.
Relevant Scrutiny Report <i>(Only complete if presenting a ministerial response)</i>	Insert S.R. number.
Associated Law(s) and/or Subordinate Legislation	Insert the law(s), regulations, order(s) either enabling or related to the decision.
Action required if recommendation agreed	Department to take necessary action.

Resource Implications	There are no new financial and/or manpower implications.
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## Introduction

Covid-19 Sickness Benefit or Isolation Benefit was introduced, quickly, by the Minister for Social Security early in 2020. It allowed people to claim the standard rate of benefit via an online form if they needed to self-isolate in line with public health advice as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Claimants were not required to consult with their GP or provide a medical certificate. This enabled speedy access to financial support, offered an added incentive to comply with the legal requirement to isolate and allowed benefit to be accessed without GP certification at a time when it was important to protect primary care capacity and when leaving your home was only recommended in essential circumstances.

The benefit has been available to working aged people who were required to isolate for a variety of reasons over the course of the last 2 years, including that they;

- had tested positive for coronavirus (as confirmed by Government)
- were showing symptoms consistent with public health advice to self-isolate
- had been identified as a direct contact of a someone who had tested positive
- had recently returned from travel abroad and are following public health advice to self-isolate
- were a parent isolating with a child where the child was direct contact of a positive case or had recently travelled
- were a person who had to isolate because a member of their household that they care for was a direct contact of a positive case or had recently travelled
- were people unable to isolate within their home due to its restricted size

The benefit was not available if a person did not normally work or if they were being paid or working from home in any of the situations listed above.

Customers applied directly to Customer and Local Services (CLS) via an online form and selected the relevant option as their reason for self-isolating.

The scheme was established as a temporary measure to support the Island's response to Coronavirus.

It was enabled by the following legislation:

- payments from the Social Security Fund, as Short-term Incapacity Allowance, payable under Article 15 of the Social Security (Jersey) Law 1974, using the provisions of Article 12(7) of the Social Security (General Benefit) (Jersey) Order 1975 and Article 2(1)(b) of the Social Security (Medical Certification) (Jersey) Order 1974 to vary the evidence required to make the benefit payable and,
- in cases where there is an inadequate social security contribution record, Special Payments under Article 8(2) of the Income Support (Jersey) Law 2007.

The scheme was maintained by a series of Ministerial Decisions:

- **MD-S-2020-0010 (signed 24/02/20)**

With reference to the Social Security (Medical Certification) (Jersey) Order 1974, Article 2 (1) (b) and advice issued by the Deputy Medical Officer of Health, the Minister for Social Security approved the Covid 19 Sickness Benefit scheme to consider applications for Short Term

Incapacity Allowance without a medical certificate, using alternative forms of evidence to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19.

- **MD-S-2020-0017 (signed 23/03/20)**

In addition to existing ministerial delegations the Minister for Social Security made further to delegations in response to Covid-19 to enable determining officers under Article 8(2) of the Income Support Jersey Law 2007 to make income support special payments equivalent in value for up to 14 days Short Term Incapacity Allowance to Covid 19 Sickness Benefit claimants.

The delegations were to remain in force for three months from the date of the decision, subject to review or extension by the Minister.

- **MD-S-2020-0027 (signed 13/05/20)**

Eligibility criteria for Covid 19 Sickness Benefit was extended in light of changes to Public Health advice and the value of the Income Support Special payments, delegated to Determining Officers under Article 8(2) of the income support law, were extended from 14 days to 21 days, change effective from 28/03/20.

- **MD-S-2020 0036 (signed 23/06/2020)**

Delegations were extended for a further three months and the ability of the Determining Officer to make special payments under Article 8(2) of the Income Support Jersey Law 2007 was given as a value equivalent to 14 days Short Term Incapacity Allowance.

- **MD-S-2020-0055 (11/09/2020)**

Amendment to the on-line form in order to allow for the collection of information from the claimant by which they can declare the valid medical reason under which they refused a PCR test and wish to claim 14 days of Covid 19 Sickness Benefit (Isolation Benefit).

The Minister, having delegated the power to make exceptional payments available to her under Article 8(2) of the Income Support (Jersey) Law 2007 to Determining Officers appointed under that Law. It is intended that this should allow the maximum value of 21 days of STIA to be made, under ministerial guidance, to people who would not normally qualify for Short Term Incapacity Allowance (STIA).

- **MD-S-2020-0060 (24/09/2020)**

This MD was a further extension of the delegations described in MD-S-2020-0036. The extension ran from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

- **MD-S-2020-0086 (signed 09/12/2020)**

Variations to the scheme which added to new groups the list of those able to claim i.e. parents isolating with children and people required to isolate because someone in their households that they cared for was a direct contact.

- **MD-S-2020-0092 (signed 21/12/2020)**

Updated the delegation rules to allow the payment of up to 24 days of STIA via an Income Support special payment.

- **MD-S-2021-0023 (signed 01/03/2021)**

Variations to the administration of the scheme in relation to the submission of documents and proofs.

- **MD-S-2021-0029 (signed 26/03/2021)**  
Extended delegations (from MD-S-2020-0060) until the end of 2021.
- **MD-S-2021-0085 (signed 03/12/2021)**  
Extended delegations until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.
- **MD-SOSEC-2022-225 (signed 01/04/2022)**  
Extended delegations until 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022.

All the above Ministerial Decisions are publicly available [here](#).

The delegations relating to this scheme will fall away on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022 when the current MD expires, this will allow for legacy claims to be processed as normal.

### **Recommendation**

To agree the case.

### **Detail (Decision and Reason for decision)**

On Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Public Health announced the further relaxation of restrictions in relation to coronavirus, including the removal of the legal requirement to isolate following a positive test. This change becomes effective from 00:01 on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

Accordingly, the Minister for Social Security has decided that Isolation Benefit will end at the same time as the change to the legal requirement becomes effective i.e. 00:01 on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April. After this time there will be a reversion to the use of Short Term Incapacity Allowance (STIA) for anyone who is unwell and unable to work.

Since 2020 Isolation Benefit has provided financial support for around 11,000 isolating Islanders. However, as we begin to return to normal, the requirement for this scheme has now diminished and normal sickness benefit rules will apply.

Anyone who was isolating before the legal requirement to isolate is removed, will still be able to claim Isolation Benefit for the period when the legal requirement to isolate was still in place i.e. prior to 00:01 on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The isolation benefit online form will be available until early in June to facilitate these legacy claims.

The Minister will shortly be publishing a further (separate) Ministerial Decision which will describe a method of applying for Short Term Incapacity Allowance (STIA) for anyone who has received a positive test for coronavirus and is unwell, which will negate the need for a medical certificate from a GP.

### **Resource and Manpower implications**

There are no additional resource or manpower implications to this decision