

Test and Trace Support Payments

Introduction

From 28 September 2020, individuals will be able to claim a payment of £500 if they are required to self isolate by the NHS Test and Trace process, cannot work from home and will lose money as a result.

Qualifying Criteria

Applicants must satisfy the below:

- Have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app because they have tested positive for COVID-19;
Or
- Have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app because they have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive, and are not exempt from self isolation;
- Are employed or self- employed
- Cannot work from home and will lose money

Where an individual satisfies the above criteria they will be then considered under the scheme's 2 elements:

- **Main Scheme** – with the qualifying criteria being prescribed by Government
- **Discretionary Scheme** – whereby the Council can extend the payments to people who satisfy most of the main criteria but are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

Main Scheme Qualifying Criteria

- Are currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income based Jobseekers' Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.

Discretionary Scheme Qualifying Criteria

The Council manages a Discretionary Scheme to cover people who satisfy most of the criteria of the Main Scheme, but do not receive a qualifying benefit. A £500 payment can be made if they would suffer financial hardship as a result of the self isolation.

Individuals may be entitled to a Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 if they:

- are not currently in receipt of Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income-Based Employment and Support Allowance, Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit; and
- are a low income worker; (see below) and
- have accessible capital of less than £6000; and
- are suffering financial hardship due to a loss of income. The applicant will need to demonstrate that hardship.

Definition of a low income earner:

A low income worker is defined as a single person with gross earnings below £20,000 per year or a couple with combined gross earnings below £40,000 per year.

Definition of financial hardship

Financial hardship will be classed as an inability to meet committed outgoings due to loss of income during self isolation.

Evidence Required for Test and Trace Support Payment.

The applicant will need to provide the following information via the on-line Test and Trace Support Payment Application Form

- A notification from NHS Test and Trace requiring self-isolation.
- Proof of receipt of a qualifying benefit (Main Scheme)
- The most recent bank statement for the account the support payment will be paid into.
- Recent proof of employment or self employment, evidence of self-assessment returns, trading income and proof that the business delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact.

Application Process

A declaration is needed that the applicant cannot work from home due to the nature of the work and will lose income as a result of self-isolation.

Individuals wishing to make a claim for **Discretionary Payments** will need to complete the supplementary questions within the online form and demonstrate that they will suffer hardship.

Individuals who are not able to claim on-line will be given appropriate telephone support.

Claims will only be accepted up to 42 days after the child or young person's first day of self isolation.

The Council may request such supporting evidence as it feels appropriate to substantiate that the applicant meets the qualifying criteria.

The payment is fixed amount of £500 for each separate period of isolation.

People may qualify several times for several periods of isolation provided the isolations are entirely separate and do not overlap.

Members of the same household (including partners) may each qualify for a £500 payment simultaneously provided each meets the qualifying criteria.

Assessment and Appeals Process

Applications for the payments are managed within the Revenues and Benefits Service. Whilst no formal appeals process exists, an applicant who is aggrieved by a decision to refuse a payment may ask for it to be reviewed by a more senior officer.

- Assessments are made by Benefit Officers and Senior Benefits Officers.
- Payments are approved by Senior and Principal Benefit Officers
- Reviews are undertaken by Principal Officers, the Benefits and Compliance Manager or Local Taxation and Benefits Manager.

Payment Process

Payments will be made by bank transfer into a verified bank account.

If you are overdrawn at the bank, you can exercise your **first right of appropriation** to ensure that the bank does not use the payment to pay the overdraft. You should speak to your bank in the first instance, they may ask you to make your request in writing.

Fraud and Abuse of the Scheme

The Council is committed to the fight against fraud in all its forms. Appropriate checks will be made both before and after payments are made.

Any person who falsely declares their circumstances or provides a false statement or evidence in support of their application, may have committed a criminal offence.

Where the Council suspects that such a fraud may have occurred, or a payment has been paid that is not due, the matter will be investigated and this may lead to the council re-claiming the payment and criminal proceedings being instigated, as appropriate.

Test and Trace Support Payments Parents and Guardians.

Introduction

From 8 March 2021, parents or guardians who are not legally required to self-isolate can apply for a payment of £500 Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary payment if they need to take time off work to care for a child or young person, cannot work from home and will lose money as a result.

Qualifying Criteria

Applicants must satisfy the below:

- they are the parent or guardian of a young person in the same household who is self-isolating and need to take time off work to care for them;
- they are unable to work from home and will lose income;
- the young person has:
 - tested positive for COVID-19 and is aged 15 or under, or aged 25 or under with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan;
 - or**
 - been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 (by NHS Test and Trace, their education or care setting or the NHS COVID-19 app), is aged 18-25, is not exempt from self isolation **and** has an EHC Plan;
- the young person normally attends an education or care setting; and
- the parent or guardian meets all the other criteria for either a 'main' or 'discretionary' scheme.

The scheme has 2 elements

- **Main Scheme** – with the qualifying criteria being prescribed by Government and listed above under the section called Main Scheme Qualifying Criteria
- **Discretionary Scheme** – whereby the Council can extend the payments to people who satisfy most of the main criteria but are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit. The qualifying criteria is listed above can be found under the section called Discretionary Scheme Qualifying Criteria.

Evidence Required for Test and Trace Payments Parents and Guardians.

The applicant will need to provide the following information via the on-line Test and Trace Support Payment Application Form

- the young person's eight-digit NHS Test and Trace ID number. This will have been sent by NHS Test and Trace because the young person has tested

positive or, if aged 18-25 with an EHC Plan and not fully vaccinated, because they have been identified as a contact.

Or

- a screenshot of a young person's NHS COVID-19 App notification telling them to self-isolate. This is only for parents or guardians of young people aged 18-25 who have an EHC Plan and are not exempt from self isolation.

AND

- Proof of receipt of a qualifying benefit (main scheme)
- The most recent bank statement for the account the support payment will be paid into.
- Recent proof of employment or self employment, evidence of self-assessment returns, trading income and proof that the business delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact.

Application Process

A declaration is needed that the applicant cannot work from home due to the nature of the work and will lose income as a result of the child or young persons' self-isolation.

Individuals wishing to make a claim for **Discretionary Payments** will need to complete the supplementary questions within the online form and demonstrate that they will suffer hardship.

Individuals who are not able to claim on-line will be given appropriate telephone support.

Claims will only be accepted up to 42 days after the child or young person's first day of self isolation.

The Council may request such supporting evidence as it feels appropriate to substantiate that the applicant meets the qualifying criteria.

Application from members of the same household

Parents and guardians who are not legally required to self-isolate can make **one application per household for the child or young person's self isolation period.**

People in the same household who are applying because they are legally required to self-isolate can make an individual application to receive the payment under the Test and Trace Support Payment

Applications that overlap with another period of self-isolation.

A parent or guardian can claim more than once, provided their child or young person's self isolation periods do not overlap. This applies irrespective of whether the parent or guardian is claiming twice for the same child, or for two different children.

Assessment and Appeals Process

Applications for the payments are managed within the Revenues and Benefits Service. Whilst no formal appeals process exists, an applicant who is aggrieved by a decision to refuse a payment may ask for it to be reviewed by a more senior officer.

- Assessments are made by Benefit Officers and Senior Benefits Officers.
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