



# **Test and Trace Discretionary Policy 2020**

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## **1. Test and Trace Discretionary Support Scheme**

### **1.1 Background**

A new legal obligation for a person to self-isolate if so instructed by NHS Test and Trace has been introduced to help stop the virus from continuing to spread. To support this initiative, with effect from the 28<sup>th</sup> September, a Test and Trace Support Payment has been introduced to assist residents who are financially worse off through the requirement to self-isolate.

In addition to the national support payment, the Government has also instructed local authorities to develop and adopt a discretionary scheme to provide financial support to those who fall outside of the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme.

### **1.2 Application process**

It is envisaged that the vast majority of applications will be made digitally through an online form on the Council's website. For those residents who do not have access to digital options, or lack sufficient skills, a telephone line has been made available.

Claimants will be asked for supporting evidences as and when required to support their application.

### **1.3 Eligibility criteria**

To be considered for a support payment an individual must:

- Have received an NHS Test and Trace notification to self-isolate between the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021;
- Be Working (employed or self-employed);
- Be unable to work from home and will lose income as a result of having to self-isolate;
- Not be currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit;
- Be on low income and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating;

For the purposes of this discretionary scheme the Council has determined that low income is £21,152 for single claimants and £42,304 for couples.\*

- Have fixed property costs i.e. rent or a mortgage which is generally evidenced by a liability for Council Tax.

### **1.4 Payments**

Eligible individuals will receive a payment of £500.

The payments will be made within 3 days of approval of the application form.

### **1.5 Backdating of payments**

Eligible individuals can make a claim up to 14 days after their period of self-isolation ended. Applications will not be accepted after this point.

For example, a person who is instructed by NHS Test and Trace on 1<sup>st</sup> October to stay at home and self-isolate must have applied for the Test and Trace Support Payment by 15<sup>th</sup> October.

### **1.6 Multiple claims**

Some individuals could be asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace more than once. In such circumstances, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria for each individual claim and their periods of self-isolation do not overlap multiple payments can be made.

For example, if someone claims for a period of self-isolation lasting from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 14<sup>th</sup> October and then claims again for a second period of self-isolation beginning on 10<sup>th</sup> October, they would only be allowed to claim once, because the two periods overlap. However, they would be allowed to claim for a second period of self-isolation that began after the first period had ended on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

### **1.7 Appeals**

Any appeal against a decision made under the *discretionary* policy must be made in writing and reach the Council within 7 days of an individual receiving notification of an award decision.

The Council will acknowledge the appeal within 5 working days of receipt.

The Director of Finance will consider the appeal.

The applicant will be informed of the final decision as soon as practicable thereafter.

*\*Source – 'Annual survey of hours and earnings' 2019 Office of National Statistics.*