

Appendix A

Test and Trace Support Payment

Discretionary Scheme

**Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council,
Thanet District Council**

February 2021

1. Introduction and Purpose

From 28 September 2020, individuals will be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 if they:

- Have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive
- Are employed or self-employed
- Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result
- Are currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.

This payment is designed to support people on low incomes, if they will lose income because of self-isolating, and to encourage them to get tested if they have symptoms. This is important to help stop the transmission of COVID-19 and avoid further economic and societal restrictions. The scheme will last until 31 March 2021.

In recognising that there may be circumstances where an individual meets the main qualifying criteria for the Test and Trace Support Payment (i.e. they are a low-income worker who is unable to work because they are self-isolating) but are not in receipt of qualifying benefits and could suffer financial hardship as a result of not being able to work, the Council are implementing a Discretionary Scheme.

This document confirms the criteria and approach to administering the Discretionary Scheme.

2. Eligibility for payments

Discretionary Scheme Criteria

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

- Have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive
- Are employed or self-employed
- Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result

and are either:

- Awaiting the outcome of a claim for a qualifying benefit or
- Not entitled to a qualifying benefit by virtue of their immigration status and designation that they have no recourse to public funds or
- Have savings below £6000, and have income less than £480 per week (single person), or £720 per week (couples, single parents, families)

In all cases, a payment will be dependant upon completion of an income and expenditure form that demonstrates that the applicant is suffering significant hardship to have an immediate underlying entitlement to welfare assistance.

A qualifying benefit for the purpose of the Discretionary Tests and Trace Support Payment is Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.

Any claim on grounds of immigration status for the purpose of this scheme must relate to a period including that immediately before the date the applicant has been advised to self-isolate by the NHS Test and Trace Service.

Claim Period

Eligibility for the Test and Trace Discretionary payments will be for people who are told to self-isolate on or after 28 September 2020 and who meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

The Council will not accept applications from people told to self-isolate before 28 September 2020, even if the period of self-isolation continues after 28 September.

Applications from members of the same household

People in the same household can each make an individual application to receive the payment if they each meet the eligibility criteria. They will be given a unique reference number by NHS Test and Trace.

Multiple claims

Someone can claim more than once (if they are told to self-isolate multiple times), if they meet the eligibility criteria for each individual claim and their periods of self-isolation do not overlap.

Discretionary Track and Trace Support Payments are for where an individual meets the main qualifying criteria for the Test and Trace Support Payment (i.e.

they are a low-income worker who is unable to work because they are self-isolating) but are not in receipt of qualifying benefits and will suffer financial hardship as a result of not being able to work. A discretionary payment cannot be made for any period where there is entitlement to a Test and Trace Support Payment.

Applications made after someone's period of self-isolation has ended

Eligible individuals can make a claim up to 28 days after their period of self-isolation started. The Council will not accept applications after this point.

Third-party applications

Applications can be made on behalf of someone else. However, the £500 must be paid into a bank account in the name of the person for whom the application is being made (so, for example, if someone applied on behalf of a parent, the payment would be made into the parent's bank account).

3. Scheme exclusions

Applicants who are quarantining after returning to the UK

The Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment scheme does not cover people who are self-isolating after returning to the UK from abroad, unless they have tested positive for coronavirus and have been instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

Applicants who are furloughed

The Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment is for people facing a reduction in income because they cannot work while self-isolating. Payment will not therefore be made to applicants whose income is lower than normal because they are furloughed.

Applicants receiving full sick pay.

The Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment is for people facing a reduction in income because they cannot work while self-isolating. Payment will not therefore be made to applicants where they receive full sick pay from their employer.

4. How the grant will be provided

Local authorities are responsible for delivering the Discretionary Grant Scheme to eligible residents.

Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides all local authorities with the power to make these payments.

The Government will meet associated New Burdens costs and local billing authorities will receive funding from the Government with which to make payments. All awards will be subject to available funding and the Council may suspend or end the scheme in the absence of available funding.

5. Application process

There will be an online application process available through the Council's website, with customers unable to access the online application supported to make an application by telephone through the Council's contact centre. The scheme will be widely publicised on the council's website to encourage take-up.

Applications will allow the Council to undertake pre-payment checks to confirm eligibility, with applicants required to provide evidence as part of the application process to support their eligibility.

The period for applications will be 28.09.2020 to 31 .03.2021. If the national Test & Trace Support Payment scheme is extended by government then this policy will automatically be extended in line with that.

No applications outside this period will be considered.

6. Decision making

No grant payment will be paid without an application being made.

In the interests of efficiency, the authority is to consider applications is delegated to Civica who will ensure that administrative arrangements are in place for applicants to receive a decision regarding their application within 72 hours, or as soon as is reasonably practical. The decision notice will be sent by email or otherwise.

Where the decision is made to refuse payment, there is no right of appeal. This is in line with the national guidance provided by the Department of Health and Social Care.

7. Variations to this scheme

The council reserves the right to vary the criteria set out within this scheme at any time, in light of any changes to the funding available.

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