



Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme Policy

1 October 2020

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Aims of the Policy

From the 28 September 2020, individuals are entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment or Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment of £500. This is to support people on low incomes who are unable to work from home if they are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and will lose income as a result.

These payments are designed to help ensure people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their close contacts self-isolate for the required period to stop the onward spread of the virus. They are also designed to encourage individuals who are eligible for this payment 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.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the administration of the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payments for residents in the Wigan Borough.

Statutory basis for the Policy

The Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme adheres to the following national rules and guidance:

Department of Health & Social Care, The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme: Implementation Guide for Local Authorities in England. Version 0.2 Published - 30 September 2020.

Eligibility

Wigan Council will consider making a £500 Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment to individuals who:

- have been told to stay 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; and
- are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result.

In addition, the discretionary payment is for people:

- who have property related costs e.g. rent/mortgage and are liable for Council Tax (occupied properties only) we may consider applications from those who are not liable for Council Tax where a formal tenancy agreement is in place;
- who are not 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; and
- who are on low incomes and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating
- who have no recourse to public funds if they meet criteria above.

Backdating

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

Individuals will be able to claim retrospectively if their period of self-isolation began on or after this date.

We are unable to accept applications from individuals 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.

Multiple claims

Some individuals could be asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace more than once.

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.

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

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

Third-party applications

Individuals can apply 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.

Applicants with other support needs

Applicants will be signposted to the Council's website for further information on what additional support is available.

Applicants who are self-isolating but have not been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace

Applications can only be considered from individuals who have a valid notification from NHS Test and Trace telling them to stay at home and self-isolate.

Applicants who are quarantining after returning to the UK

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

Application process

To apply individuals will complete the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment online form or telephone application if digitally excluded and provide:

- a notification from NHS Test and Trace asking them to self-isolate;
- a bank statement (as a basic up-front fraud check); and
- proof of employment or, if they are self-employed, evidence of self-assessment returns, trading income and proof that their business delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact
- Evidence of hardship

Once all evidence has been verified, and we are satisfied that the applicant will face hardship if they have to self-isolate because they cannot work and that they meet the eligibility criteria to receive a discretionary payment we will pay the applicant £500.

How applicants should provide evidence

As applicants will be self-isolating at home, evidence can be uploaded electronically within the application form.

As some applicants will not have access to scanning equipment while they are self-isolate, we are able to accept photographs of documents.

Payments

Payments will be made as a faster payment, to the bank account matching the bank statement and details provided in the application form.

Successful applicants will receive an email to confirm that they have been paid.

Appeals

There is no right of appeal against any decision not to award a Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment, applicants who are turned down will not be eligible because they do not meet the criteria.

We will work with applicants to make sure they provide the necessary evidence to support a successful application.

Fraud

The Local Authority has the right to recover costs from applicants who claim the payment fraudulently.