

Member Briefing

Number: 1587

Title: Test and Trace self-isolation discretionary payment scheme

Summary: To provide members with details of the Test and Trace Support Scheme.

Background

On 2 October the Government provided the council with guidelines on which to base their Test and Trace self-isolation discretionary payment scheme. This scheme will complement the government's Test and Trace self-isolation support scheme.

The government have provided funding to the council for the discretionary scheme to help those who require corresponding financial support to the Test and Trace Support Payment to self-isolate, but do not meet all of the eligibility criteria for the main scheme.

Who will be eligible for a discretionary Test and Trace Self-isolation Payment?

The council can make a £500 discretionary payment to an individual who:

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

In addition, the discretionary scheme is for people who:

- 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
- are on low incomes and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating.

Unlike the main Test and Trace Support scheme, applicants are not required to be in receipt of a qualifying benefit. Therefore, if an applicant does not satisfy the main scheme criteria because they are awaiting the outcome of an application, they can apply to the discretionary scheme. People without recourse to public funds may also apply subject to them meeting all other qualifying criteria for universal credit, such as the income and capital tests.

Any cases of exceptional hardship may be considered where these tests are met. To be eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment, an individual must:

- have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or a Council Public Health Officer either because they've tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive;
- be employed or self-employed;
- be unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and

Individuals who are required to self-isolate and who meet the benefits linked eligibility criteria will be entitled to £500 which will be payable as a lump sum. The payment will be subject to income tax but not be subject to National Insurance contributions.

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Responsible Committee, Cabinet Member: Cllr Carol Gahan

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