



Test and Trace Support Payments

20 January 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1 From 28 September 2020, individuals will be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 if they:
- a) 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, and;
 - b) Are employed or self-employed, and;
 - c) Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result, and;
 - d) 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.
- 1.2 This payment is designed to support people on low incomes, if they will lose income as a result 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 31st March 2021.

2. Discretionary Scheme

- 2.1 The Test and Trace Payment scheme includes provision for applicants who meet the first three criteria of the main scheme's eligibility but who are not currently in receipt of any of the qualifying benefits.
- 2.2 Individuals may make an application to the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Scheme if they:

- a) 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, and;
 - b) Are employed or self-employed, and;
 - c) Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result.
- 2.3 Applications for the Discretionary Scheme will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and we will work with applicants in order to maximise their entitlement to a support payment.
- 2.4 With the exception of being in receipt of a qualifying benefits, all other scheme criteria for the Discretionary Scheme will be the same as for the main scheme, as outlined in this document.

3. Date of isolation and backdating

- 3.1 Eligibility for the Test and Trace Support Payment, including discretionary payments, will be for people who are told to self-isolate on or after 28th September 2020 and who meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

3.2 Backdated applications

Residents will be able to claim retrospectively, as long as their period of self-isolation began on or after 28th September 2020. On Monday 18th January, the rules around making an application after your isolation period ended were changed by the Government. Up to 17th January 2021, residents could apply for a payment up to two weeks (14 days) after their isolation period ended. From 18th January 2021, this changes to 28 days meaning that applicants can apply for a payment up to 28 days after their isolation period starts. This applies only to applications made on or after 18th January 2021. Retrospective applications can be made up to 28 days after the start of the resident's isolation period. We are not able to accept or pay any applications after this date.

3.3 Isolation periods prior to 28th September 2020

We are not able to accept applications from people told to self-isolate before 28 September 2020, even if the period of self-isolation continues until or after 28 September.

3.4 Applications made after the period of isolation

From 18th January 2021, this changes to 28 days meaning that applicants can apply for a payment up to 28 days after their isolation period starts. This applies only to applications made on or after 18th January 2021. Retrospective applications can be made up to 28 days after the start of the resident's isolation period. We are not able to accept or pay any applications after this date.

- 3.5 **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 as an individual applicant.
- 3.6 **Multiple claims**
An individual can claim more than once (if they are told to self-isolate multiple times), as long as they meet the eligibility criteria for each individual claim and their periods of self-isolation do not overlap.
- 3.7 **Third-party applications**
Applicants can apply on behalf of someone else. However, the £500 will 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).
- 3.8 **Applicants who are self-isolating who haven't been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace**
We are not able to approve applications for anyone who does not have a valid notification from NHS Test and Trace. The legal duty to self-isolate that comes into force on 28 September 2020 applies only to people who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
- 3.9 **Applicants who are quarantining after returning to the UK**
The 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 or have been instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
- 3.10 **Applicants who are furloughed**
We are not able to make payments to applicants whose income is lower than normal because they are furloughed. The Test and Trace Support Payment is for people facing a reduction in income because they cannot work while self-isolating.

4. Application process

- 4.1 To apply, applicants will complete an online form available at www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/testandtracesupport
- 4.2 A telephone application can be made by calling 01254 388 111 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm for resident who do not have access to the internet. All residents will be encouraged when they telephone us to use the online form whenever possible.
- 4.3 **Evidence requirements**
To support their application, all applicants must provide all evidence required to assess and pay a Track and Trace Support Payment. This evidence includes:
1. A notification from NHS Test and Trace asking them to self-isolate;

2. Proof of receipt of one of the qualifying benefits;
3. A bank statement from a live bank or building society account in the name of the applicant; and
4. Proof of employment or, if they are self-employed, evidence of self-assessment returns, trading income and proof that their business or employment delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact.

4.4 Evidence can be provided online at the time of application or by email to enquiries@hyndburnbc.gov.uk

4.5 Evidence to support an application can be a scanned copy, a clear photograph of the evidence or screen shots of online accounts. Hard copy evidence should be provided as a last resort and may delay any payment.

4.6 **Payment**

Once this evidence has been verified, and we are satisfied that the application meets the criteria for the Track and Trace Support Payment, we will pay the applicant £500. We aim to make this payment within three working days once all appropriate checks and verification has been completed.

4.7 A single payment of £500 will be made by BACS transfer or Faster Payments to the person named on bank statement provided as evidence to support the application. Payment by cheque or cash is not available.

4.8 Successful applicants will receive notification via email or post if email is not available that a payment will be made. Unsuccessful applicants will be given an explanation of their application outcome along with advice on making future applications.

4.9 **Taxation**

These payments will be subject to income tax. Payments under the standard eligibility criteria will not be subject to National Insurance contributions. Details of successful payments will be sent to HMRC to make any necessary changes to the recipient's income tax calculations

4.10 **Eligibility for other benefits**

These payments will be disregarded when calculating eligibility for other benefits. This includes calculating entitlement to Universal Credit.

5. **Appeals**

5.1 Unsuccessful applicants will not be eligible because they do not meet, or are unable to prove that they meet the scheme's criteria. There is no right of appeal against any decision not to award a payment, either for the main Test and Trace Support Payment or for applications to

receive a discretionary payment. Should any applicant disagree with a decision not to award a Test and Trace payment, they may ask for their application to be reviewed by another officer.

- 5.2 Where possible, we will work with applicants to make sure they provided the necessary evidence to support a successful application. For instance, someone who is self-employed may have forgotten to provide their self-assessment return in the first instance.

6. Evidence of failure to self-isolate

- 6.1 If we become aware, either through post-payment verification checks or through other means, that someone has not self-isolated, we will refer the case to the police.
- 6.2 If, as a result of post-payment verifications it is evident that an individual in receipt of a support payment has not self-isolated, the support payment may be recovered.

7. Fraud

- 7.1 We are responsible for fraud-prevention measures and the protection of public funds.
- 7.2 Local authorities have the right to recover costs from people who claim the payment fraudulently.

8. Publication

- 8.1 Details of this scheme will be published on our website and paper copies of this document will be made available to residents by request.

9. Complaints

- 9.1 The Council's Complaints Procedure will apply in the event of any complaint about the application of this scheme.

10. Equalities

- 10.1 Our intention is to make this scheme fair and equitable for all applicants. This scheme is accompanied by a Customer First Analysis which has been produced in response to our obligation to the Public Sector Equality Duty as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. No adverse impact on any protected characteristic has been identified as a result of this scheme.

11. Data Protection

- 11.1 Details of our privacy notice can be found at www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/privacy-notice/