

**Southwark Council Test & Trace Support Payment Scheme 2020/2021**

1. Introduction

From 28 September 2020 there is a new legal duty for all UK residents who test positive for COVID-19, or are identified by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact, requiring them to self-isolate where they are told to do so.

To support this the government has introduced a Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to be administered by local authorities to support people on low incomes who are unable to work from home if they are told to self-isolate and will lose income as a result.

The scheme will run from the 28 September 2020 to the 31 January 2021.

2. Purpose of the scheme

To provide a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500, paid as a lump sum, for those on low incomes to support them if they cannot work during their self-isolation period and have lost income as a direct result of self-isolation.

The scheme will apply to people notified to self-isolate on or after 28 September, not before that date.

3. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for support you must:

- live in Southwark;
- been notified to self-isolate on or after 28 September 2020;
- have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace 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;

- be 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
- make a claim within 14 days of the last day of your self-isolation.

Applicants are not eligible if:

- are self-isolating after travelling abroad (unless they test positive during the 14 day quarantine period and have received a self-isolation notification from NHS Test and Trace);
- continue to get full wages while they self-isolate;
- received notification to self-isolate before the 28 September 2020; and
- have not been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
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People in the same household can each make an individual application to receive a payment if they each meet the eligibility criteria.

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

Eligible individuals can make backdated claims but this must be no longer than up to 14 days after their period of self-isolation ends.

#### 4. Application

Applications can be made online or by telephone.

Applicants must provide:

- account ID from NHS Test and Trace;
- copy of their latest bank statement;
- most recent wage slip with employer's contact details if employed;
- a recent business bank statement, set of accounts or self-assessment form if self-employed; and
- their National Insurance number.

Third party applications can be made but payment will only be made into the bank account of the person for whom the application is being made.

Pre payment checks are carried out to verify:

- NHS Test and Trace self-isolation ID and start date of self-isolation period through the NHS Test and Trace database;
- that the applicant is employed or self-employed; and
- that the applicant is in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

## 5. Payment

Individuals who are required to self-isolate and who meet the eligibility criteria will be entitled to £500. This will be payable as a lump sum within 3 working days of verifying the application.

The payment will be made via BACS transfer direct into the applicant's bank account.

Successful applicants will receive an award confirmation letter including details of additional support that is available for people who are self-isolating.

These payments will be subject to income tax, but they will not be subject to National Insurance contributions. Payments will also be disregarded when calculating eligibility for other welfare benefits.

## 6. Discretionary scheme

Discretionary payments will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If an applicant meets the qualifying criteria as part of the main scheme, except for being in receipt of a qualifying benefit, then a payment may be made in some circumstances.

Although payments under this additional scheme are not considered under a prescribed set of eligibility criteria circumstances that will be considered are when an applicant:

- has applied for a qualifying benefit and is waiting for a decision;
- has been refused entitlement to a qualifying benefit but are appealing the decision;
- has no recourse to public funds (NRPF);
- is not entitled to a qualifying benefit as they are in receipt of State Pension; and

- is on a low income and can demonstrate clear mitigating circumstances that significant financial hardship will be experienced without a payment.
- The earnings level below which applicants will usually be considered as eligible is arrived at using a combination of elements including the level of the London Living Wage, income tax thresholds and Universal Credit rates
- Those with net earnings above that level will not usually be eligible for a discretionary payment but exceptions may be made in some circumstances, for example where the household includes one or more dependent children, or where the applicant has housing costs, and where there is no second earner.

Payments under the discretionary scheme mirror the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme at £500. Payment will be made as per section 5 above.