



South Cambridgeshire District Council Discretionary Policy Test and Trace Support Payments

Version	Initial
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Approved by	Dawn Graham
Approval date	06/10/20
Publication date	09/10/20
Date of next review	TBC



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Introduction

Test and Trace Support Payments: an overview

From 28 September 2020, individuals are entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary 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.

The scheme starts from 28 September 2020, and local authorities have been asked to have arrangements in place to administer payments by 12 October 2020.



Government-set Eligibility Criteria

Test and Trace Support Payment

Eligibility for a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment is restricted to people who:

1. 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.
2. are employed or self-employed; are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result.
and
3. 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.

Discretionary Payment

Whilst the Track and Trace is a discretionary scheme for local authorities to deliver, many of the criteria have been set nationally, Local authorities can make a £500 discretionary payment to individuals who are not eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payments:

1. 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.
2. are employed or self-employed; and are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result.
3. in addition, the discretionary payment is for people: 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.



4. on low income and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work whilst self-isolating.

Eligibility Criteria

The discretionary scheme is for applicants who are not eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment. Applicants will need to meet the government eligibility criteria.

Locally set Payment Details, Eligibility and Exclusions

Payment Details and Eligibility

The Council will make one payment of £500 per application based on an individual period of self-isolation providing the applicant meets both the government eligibility and the additional locally set criteria.

Exclusions

Applicants who have capital of £1,500 or will be excluded from receiving a discretionary payment unless there are exceptional reasons.

Determinations of Applications

Consideration of applications will be dependent on the submission of a complete and valid online application form from the South Cambridgeshire District Council website. This will include the provision of sufficient information and evidence to allow eligibility checks to take place. Those who are not able to complete application online who contact the council will be supported to make an application.

All residents submitting applications will be required to complete a declaration to confirm the details are correct, that they are eligible based on the government criteria and for Discretionary Payment will need to confirm that they will suffer financial hardship.

Applications where capital is at or above £1,500 will only be considered in exceptional cases and will be agreed by the Benefits Manager or Communities and Communications Service Manager.



Payment will be made by BACS to the applicants' bank account. Payments will be within 3 working days of receipt of a fully complete application. Applicants will be notified of the award by letter or email that payment has been made.

Anti-Fraud Measures

South Cambridgeshire District Council will conduct post payments checks to prevent fraud and that applicants employer may be contacted to confirm that full pay was not received for the period of isolation and the applicant would have a reduction in their income and their role was not able to be conducted whilst in self isolation.

We will take steps to recover the payment from applicants who claim the payment fraudulently- and example would be where full pay is received from employment for the self-isolation period.

In addition to the eligibility checks there will be a process managed by Internal Audit which uses government schemes such as the National Fraud Initiative to ensure the Council takes reasonable steps in prevention of fraud and error.

Appeals

Whilst there is no formal right of appeal, if the applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they can request a review of the decision. The request should be submitted in writing, detailing the reasons why a review is considered necessary, and providing any additional supporting information required. The review will be undertaken by an officer who has not was involved in the previous decision.

Following the review, if the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision on a point of law, there is an appeal route by way of Judicial Review. Applicants may also lodge a complaint with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.



List of Required Evidence for Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payments

Below is a list of the minimum evidence required to support an application. We may request further information to evaluate a claim. Any delay in providing suitable evidence may impact applicants receiving a payment

- a notification from NHS Test and Trace asking applicant to self-isolate;
- a bank statement; and
- proof of employment or, if self-employed, evidence of self-assessment returns, trading income and proof that the business delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact.

Data will be collected using our online application form process and will be stored securely in line with [GDPR / DPA](#).