



1. Purpose of this document

This framework sets out the guidance for Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey District Council and South Holland District Council to help people in their area to apply for the discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment and ensure people are supported to self-isolate.

It is based on the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme: Implementation Guide for Local Authorities in England (Version 1.5, Published 22 January 2021) and additional guidance to extend the scheme to parents and guardians who are caring for a child or young person who is self-isolating (Version 1.0; Published 16 March 2021).

2. Test and Trace Support Payments: an overview

Since 28 September 2020, eligible individuals have been 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 started 28 September 2020 and will run until 30 June 2021. From 8 March 2021, the scheme has been extended so that parents or guardians who are not legally required to self-isolate can apply for a Test & Trace Support or discretionary payment if they need to take time off work to care for a child or young person who is. Applicants will need to satisfy the other eligibility criteria for the main scheme or local discretionary scheme to receive the payment.

3. Eligibility : Test & Trace Support Payment

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

- have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or via the NHS COVID-19 App, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive;
- have responded to messages received from NHS Test and Trace and have provided any legally required information;
- are employed or self-employed;
- are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and

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- are currently receiving, or are the partner of someone in the same household who is 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. Eligibility : discretionary Test & Trace support payment

Local authorities can make a £500 discretionary payment to individuals who:

- have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or via the NHS COVID-19 App, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive;
- have responded to messages received from NHS Test and Trace and have provided any legally required information;
- 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 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; and
- who have savings/capital of less than £2,000 (this is locally determined criteria)

5. Eligibility: parents and guardians who have not been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace

From 8 March 2021, parents or guardians who are not legally required to self-isolate can apply for a Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary payment if they need to take time off work to care for a child or young person who is.

Applicants must meet **all** the criteria below:

- they are the parent or guardian of a child or young person in the same household and need to take time off work to care for them while they self-isolate; and
- they are employed or self-employed; and
- they cannot work from home while undertaking caring responsibilities and will lose income as a result; and
- they meet all the other means-tested eligibility criteria for a Test and Trace Support Payment or locally determined criteria for a discretionary payment; and
- their child or young person:
 - is aged 15 or under (or 25 or under with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC)) and normally attends an education or childcare setting.
 - has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or by their education or childcare setting because they have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

6. Backdating

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Local Authorities cannot accept applications from people told to self-isolate before 28th September 2020, even if the period of self-isolation continued after 28th September 2020.

For applications from parents/guardians, the child or young person must have been told to self-isolate on or after 8 March 2021.

7. Applications from members of the same household

People in the same household who are applying because they are legally required to self-isolate can make an individual application to receive the payment. Each person will need to meet the eligibility criteria, as set out above.

Parents and guardians who are not legally required to self-isolate can make **one application per household for the child or young person's self-isolation period.**

8. Multiple claims

Someone 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.

Parent and guardian can claim more than once, provided their child or young person's self-isolation periods do not overlap. This applies irrespective of whether the parent or guardian is claiming twice for the same child, or for two different children.

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

Eligible individuals can make a claim up to 6 weeks (42 days) after the first day of isolation. Local authorities cannot accept retrospective applications after this 42-day cut-off.

10. Third-party applications

Another individual can apply on behalf of the intended recipient; however, the £500 will be paid into a bank account in the name of the person for whom the application is being made. For example, if someone applied on behalf of a parent, the payment would be made into the parent's bank account.

11. 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.

12. Applicants who are furloughed

Local Authorities cannot make payments to applicants whose income is lower than normal because they are furloughed or on the Job Support Scheme. The Test and Trace Support Payment is for people facing a reduction in income because they cannot work while self-isolating.

13. Applicants with other welfare and support needs

As part of the information available on the website and online application form, Councils will reference local support that is available for people including advising residents that if they need further support to stay at home safely, they can contact the Lincolnshire COVID helpline on 01522 782189 <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-support-services>

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14. Application process

The Councils have arrangements in place through their Revenue and Benefits service delivered by PSPS Ltd to process and verify applications, issue payments to eligible residents and prevent fraud.

An online application form is available for residents in each area to apply for the Test & Trace Support Payment. Residents without internet access or who need help to apply online will be advised to telephone the Council and will be supported to make a claim over the telephone.

15. Providing Evidence

Arrangements are in place to allow applicants to upload their evidence electronically, wherever possible. As some applicants will not have access to scanning equipment while they self-isolate, this will include accepting photographs of documents and screenshots. If a resident needs help to upload evidence, the applicant will be contacted and supported to do this. Data security and evidence provided will be retained in line with council policies.

Applicants are required to provide:

- a notification from NHS Test and Trace asking them to self-isolate (where relevant); and
- a recent bank statement;
- 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
- proof of loss of income as a result of self-isolation.

If application is from parent or guardian they will be required to provide either:

- the child's eight-digit NHS Test and Trace ID number. This is for parents and guardians of children or young people who have received a notification directly from NHS Test and Trace telling them to self-isolate; **OR**
- a communication from the child or young person's education or childcare setting confirming that they have to self-isolate. This is for parents and guardians of children or young people who have been told to self-isolate by their education or childcare setting because they have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive; **OR**
- a screenshot of a young person's NHS COVID-19 App notification telling them to self-isolate **AND** evidence that the young person has an Education, Health and Care Plan. This is for parents or guardians of young people aged 16-25 who have additional support needs and who have been notified to self-isolate by the NHS COVID-19 App.

Local authorities are not able to accept applications without **at least one** of the three pieces of supporting evidence listed above.

16. Verifying applications

Local authorities are responsible for carrying out checks on applications, verifying evidence provided to ensure they are satisfied the application meets the criteria. This is to confirm that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria for a payment and includes checking:

- the applicant's identity;

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- the applicant is employed or self-employed and will lose income because they cannot work from home;
- the applicant is receiving one of the qualifying benefits for the main Test and Trace Support Payment;
- the applicant meets any locally determined eligibility criteria for a discretionary payment;
- the applicant hasn't already received a payment for the self-isolation period in question.

If the application is from a parent or guardian, Local Authorities are also required to check:

- the child's name, age and main address;
- the child's first day of self-isolation;
- that the child didn't continue to attend the education or care setting when they should have been self-isolating;
- whether the communication from the education or care setting is genuine (if this has been submitted by the applicant).

17. Making payments

Revenues and Benefits Services aim to pay all eligible individuals within three working days of receiving the evidence to support the application. Payments will be made as a single payment, to the bank account matching the bank statement they have provided.

Revenues and Benefits Services will send each recipient a letter or email to confirm that they have been paid.

18. Applicants who are overdrawn

The application form and website advises applicants who are overdrawn how to exercise their first right of appropriation on the £500 payment, so their bank does not use it to pay their overdraft if they are overdrawn. There is a link to a letter template available on the Council's website.

19. Appeals

Local Authorities are not required to provide a right of appeal against any decision not to award a discretionary payment. People who are turned down will not be eligible because they do not meet the criteria.

20. Taxation

These payments will be subject to income tax, but they will not be subject to National Insurance Contributions (NICs).

21. Eligibility for other benefits

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

22. Evidence of failure to self-isolate

If the Council becomes aware, either through post-payment verification checks or through other means, that someone has not self-isolated, they will need to refer the case to the police. Recovery of

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the discretionary payments made to the individual will be carried out in line with government guidance.

23. Fraud

The Councils have the right to recover costs from people who claim the payment fraudulently and can keep any money recovered to put towards costs of running the scheme. The Councils are not liable for any unrecoverable costs due to fraud.