

# **The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme**

## **Purpose**

For the Council to have in place a process to make Test and Trace support payments available for residents of the London Borough of Hounslow who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and who are unable to work from home and they will lose income as a result.

Payments of £500 will be made by the Council to individuals who are required to self-isolate and who would lose income as a result. This scheme applies to those on lower income.

The scheme will last until 31 January 2021.

The Council will deliver these payments by 12th October, with backdated payments available to those who have been required to self-isolate from 28th September onwards.

## **Eligibility criteria**

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, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive;
- are employed or self-employed;
- are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and
- are currently receiving one of the following qualifying benefits:
  - Universal Credit
  - Working Tax Credits
  - Income Support
  - Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
  - Income Related Employment Support Allowance
  - Pension Credit
  - Housing Benefit

The Council will make discretionary payments of £500 to individuals who:

- 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;
- are employed or self-employed; and

- are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result.
- 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
- who have no-recourse to public funds, provided they meet the criteria of Test and Trace and self isolation causing them to have a reduction in income.

### **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.

### **Multiple claims**

Some individuals could be asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace more than once.

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.

### **Applications made after someone's period of self-isolation has ended**

Eligible individuals can make a claim up to 14 days after their period of self-isolation ended. The Council will not accept applications after this point. For example, a person who is instructed by NHS Test and Trace on 1 October to stay at home and self-isolate must have applied for the Test and Trace Support Payment by 29 October.

Applicants who are self-isolating who haven't been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace will not be entitled to help under this scheme. The Council can only accept applications from individuals who have a valid notification from NHS Test and Trace telling them to stay at home and self-isolate.

### **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 told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

### **Application Process**

Applications will be made online via the council's website and will include agreement that the applicant consents to all stipulated declarations. All applications will need to be supported by the specified evidence which must demonstrate that they meet the relevant criteria.

An individual will be able to make a telephone application if they are digitally excluded.

The list below shows the evidence that will be acceptable. Please note, this list is exhaustive and other forms of evidence will not be accepted.

Grants will only be paid where all eligibility criteria have been suitably evidenced. .

Criteria	Acceptable evidence
a notification from NHS Test and Trace asking you to self-isolate on or after 28 September 2020.	8-character NHS Test and Trace Account ID
Proof you are employed and are unable to continue working from home	a copy of your most recent wage slip or a bank statement dated in the last 3 months showing your wages crediting the account We may also require evidence to confirm you are unable to continue working while in self-isolation
Proof you are self-employed and are unable to continue working from home	self-assessment returns, self-employment accounts and proof that your business delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact
Proof of receipt of one of the qualifying benefits below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal Credit</li> <li>• Working Tax Credit</li> <li>• Income based Employment and Support Allowance</li> <li>• Income based Jobseeker's Allowance</li> <li>• Housing Benefit</li> <li>• Pension Credit</li> </ul>	National Insurance Number
• Bank account	Bank statement Paying in slip Cheque
• Resident in the London Borough of Hounslow	We may require: Copy of a tenancy agreement or mortgage documentation, Council Tax bill or account number, utility bills or similar.

Note that a single piece of evidence may be used to demonstrate more than one criterion.

### **Determination of applications**

Applications will be considered by a dedicated review team with a recommendation made to a senior officer for approval. The process will be to review the information disclosed in the application and confirm the evidence provided supports the disclosures.

Any award will be at the absolute discretion of any of the following.

1. Head of Revenues & Benefits
2. Assistant Director Commercial and Projects

There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision regarding discretionary grants made by the Council. Any challenge will be determined by the Executive Director Finance and Resources and their decision will be final.

### **Combatting fraud**

In order to ensure that the Local Lockdown Discretionary Small Business Support Grant is not subject to potential abuse, all submitted applications will require a statutory declaration of truth, a statement regarding data processing and a recovery of funds statement. This declaration allows for the council, through the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team, to carry out pre-payment checks in order to give greater assurance that the funds are being claimed correctly. Furthermore, the declaration carries warnings which further allow the Council to consider taking criminal action against persons who have been found to have deliberately made false applications for the funding. It also allows for the recovery of funds which have been paid which should not have been.

### **The Award**

Applications will be processed on receipt in the order they are submitted. Successful applications will receive payment by BACS only.

Successful applicants will be notified upon confirmation of all verification checks being completed and provided with an indication of when they can expect to receive payment.

Applications will be closed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 or when government funding has been fully utilised. We are waiting for further guidance to confirm if this means the last date for applications to be received or that all applications received have to be paid by this date.

### **Other information**

If insufficient evidence is provided with the initial application a request for additional information will be made with in most cases a 1 day window for responses, however depending on the circumstances being presented the time may be extended to 3 days. Applicants will be allowed a 2<sup>nd</sup> opportunity to provide additional information if the initial response is still not sufficient. If there is no response or the additional information is still no sufficient to support the application, it will be rejected.