

NHS Test and Trace Payments Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The government has introduced a new Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary support payment of £500 for people who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

1.2 The payment will be made subject to certain criteria but is to help people who are on low incomes, unable to work from home and will lose income as a result of being told to self-isolate.

1.3 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.

1.4 The scheme starts from 28th September 2020 and will last until 31st January 2021. Anyone having been instructed to self-isolate on or after 28th September will be eligible but payments will not be possible until after 12th October 2020.

2. Purpose of policy

This policy sets out the eligibility criteria that the Department of Health & Social Care have given to Local Authorities for both the support and discretionary support payment.

3. Scope of policy

3.1 In order to be eligible for a support payment the applicant must

a) Have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace on or after 28th September 2020 and b) Be employed or self-employed and c) Not be able to work from home and d) Have lost income as a result of self-isolating and e) Be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits ☑ Universal Credit ☑ Working Tax Credit ☑ Income based Employment and Support Allowance ☑ Income Based Jobseekers Allowance ☑ Income Support ☑ Housing Benefit ☑ Pension Credit

3.2 In addition to the above, a discretionary support payment may be made to people who satisfy all of the criteria except for being in receipt of a benefit, listed at a to e above, if they will face financial hardship.

3.3 In all cases the payment will be a single payment of £500 for each period of self-isolation recognising that some people may be asked to self-isolate more than once. Periods that overlap will be treated as one incident.

3.4 Applications can be made during the period of self-isolation or up to 14 days after the period of self-isolation, but only where that period started on or after 28 September 2020. Anyone told to self-isolate prior to this date will not be eligible for a payment, even if they must continue to self-isolate after 28 September 2020.

3.5 People from the same household can each make an application for the support payment if they each individually meet the eligibility criteria.

4. How it relates to/underpins our strategic ambitions

This policy underpins our ambitions to be a good council that is responsive and customer focussed.

5. Policy details

5.1 This scheme is designed to support people on low incomes unable to work from home and will lose income as a result. If someone satisfies the criteria but are in receipt of furlough payments that continue, they will not be eligible.

5.2 The scheme will be administered in accordance with guidance issued by the Department of Health and Social Care that broadly falls into 2 parts: the test and trace support payment and the discretionary payment. The criteria is described in paragraph 3 of this policy.

5.3 An application form will be available on line at www.lichfielddc.gov.uk and evidence requested in the application should be uploaded with the application or e-mailed to Tstandtracepayment@lichfielddc.gov.uk. Photographs are acceptable.

5.4 Anyone who is unable to access the application should contact Lichfield Connects on 01543 308900 and an appointment will be made with an advisor.

5.5 An application will not be considered complete and eligible for payment until all evidence requested is supplied. As a minimum there are 3 main pre-payment checks

☑ Confirmation that the applicant has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. They must provide the 8 digit account ID that is provided by NHS as part of the process. ☑ Employment or self-employment. This may be a wage slip or if self-employed, evidence of self-assessment returns, trading income and proof that the business delivers services that cannot be undertaken without social contact. ☑ Entitlement to one of the benefits listed. This will be via a bank statement showing receipt of benefit.

Discretionary payments

5.6 If an applicant is not eligible for a test and trace payment and the only criterion that precludes them is that they are not in receipt of one of the benefits listed, a discretionary payment may be considered where the applicant will face financial hardship.

5.7 Local authorities are permitted to introduce additional criteria to determine to determine eligibility for discretionary payments. Discretionary payments will be operated as an alternative to test and trace payments. People will only be entitled to one payment.

5.8 Financial hardship usually refers to a situation in which a person cannot keep up payments on their bills. It is essential that people are able to access this financial support particularly in relation to paying rent and mortgage and obtaining food, fuel and other essential household goods. It is acknowledged that people spending more time at home may lead to an increase in the use of gas and electricity.

5.9 Evidence will be required from the applicant that they are unable to pay essential bills.

5.10 Applicants will not be eligible for a discretionary payment if they and/or their partner have more than £6,000 in bank accounts or accessible investments.

5.11 There is no right of formal appeal against any decision.

5.12 Payments are subject to tax.

