

## COVID-19 SELF ISOLATION PAYMENT QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### **What is the aim of the Test & Trace Support Payment?**

The Test and Trace Support Payment has been introduced in response to feedback from local authorities and directors of public health that some of their residents are struggling to self-isolate as directed due to financial constraints. It is to help ensure that people on low incomes self-isolate when they test positive or are identified as a contact, and to encourage more people to get tested. This will help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and avoid further societal and economic restrictions, including local lockdowns.

### **Who will be eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment?**

To be eligible for the test and Trace Support Payment, an individual must:

- have been asked to 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;
- be employed or self-employed
- be unable to work from home and will lose income as a result: and
- 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.

### **How much is the payment?**

Individuals who are required to self-isolate and who meet the benefits-linked eligibility criteria will be entitled to £500. This will be payable as a lump sum.

### **Will the payment be taxed?**

These payments will be subject to income tax. They will not be subject to national Insurance Contributions. Local Authorities will be required to notify payment details HMRC for tax purposes.

### **When will the payment come into force?**

The payment will come into effect on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, alongside the legal duty to self-isolate. Local authorities are expected to have their systems in place by 12<sup>th</sup> October; individuals who are eligible prior to that date will be able to make a backdated claim.

### **How long will this be in place for?**

The scheme will run until 31 January 2020. During this time the efficiency of the scheme will be reviewed, this will include the impact of COVID-19 incidence levels.

### **How will people apply for the test and Trace Support payment?**

People will make an online application (or a telephone application if digitally excluded) and be required to submit supporting evidence:

- a notification form NHS test and Trace asking them to self- isolate ( this will include a Unique ID number)
- a bank statement; and

- proof of employment, or if they are self- employed, evidence of self- assessment returns and or trading incomes.
- proof from employer that applicant is unable to work from home and will lose income as a result, or if self- employed proof that their business delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact.

**Can someone make multiple claims if asked to isolate multiple times?**

A claim, can be made for each period of self-isolation required. All eligibility criteria must be met and supporting evidence provided.

**Will Local Authorities be compensated for the administrative burden of administering the test and Trace Support Payment?**

Central government will cover the payments to eligible applicants, as well as the administration of the scheme. In addition the Department of Health and Social Care will provide an undisclosed Local Authority pot for Local Authorities to make payment s to those identified as in need who do not meet qualifying criteria - no further details are available at this point.

**Do local Authorities need to check that Test and Trace Support Payment recipients are self – isolating?**

No - Local Authorities role is to focus on encouraging, educating and supporting self-isolation compliance. They should pass on details of anyone they suspect of breaking the rules to the police.

**If fraud does occur, does the risk lie with local authorities or central government?**

Central government will cover local authorities' costs for administering the Test and Trace Support Payment. Local Authorities will have the right to recoup money from recipients who do not adhere to the scheme. Government will not seek to claw back the costs of irrecoverable fraud from local authorities.