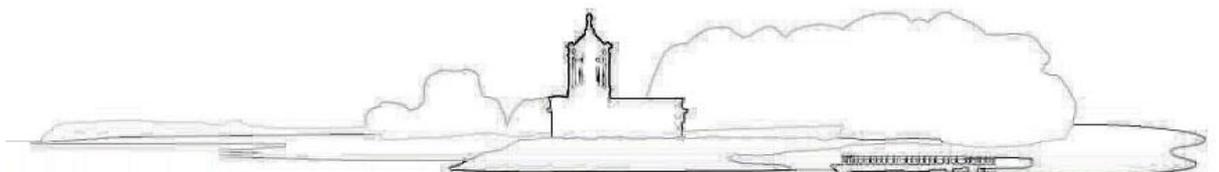


Rutland County Council

TEST AND TRACE SUPPORT PAYMENTS AND DISCRETIONARY PAYMENTS SCHEME

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Summary of document

This document details the Test and Trace Support Payments and Discretionary Payments scheme that provides £500 payments to support Rutland residents who receive a positive Covid-19 test result and are asked to self-isolate.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Government has introduced Test and Trace Support Payments alongside a Discretionary Payments scheme to support people on low incomes who are unable to work from home and have been asked to self-isolate and their income has reduced as a result of this.
- 1.2 The scheme launched on 28th September 2020 with applications being accepted from 12th October 2020. The scheme will end on 31st January 2021.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 It is now a legal requirement for people to self-isolate when asked to do so by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.
- 2.2 Failure to self-isolate can lead to fines starting at £1,000 and increasing to £10,000 for multiple or serious breaches.
- 2.3 The policy aims to operate under the 'Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme: Implementation Guide for Local Authorities in England' published by the Department of Health and Social Care (as amended).

3.0 TEST AND TRACE SUPPORT PAYMENT SCHEME

- 3.1 This scheme helps to support Rutland residents who have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test And Trace either because they've tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive between 28th September 2020 and 31st January 2021. Applicants must demonstrate that they satisfy the relevant eligibility criteria for either a Support Payment or a Discretionary Payment.
- 3.2 This policy is subject to change. Should any amendments or additions be required, the updated policy will be republished at <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-services/health-and-family/health-and-nhs/health-and-support-services/coronavirus/information-and-advice-for-residents/i-need-help/test-and-trace-support-payments/>. All applications received the day following any published amendments to the Policy will be assessed in accordance with that updated Policy.
- 3.3 Successful applicants will be awarded £500. Eligibility is assessed per individual and not per household. Support Payments are not limited by any budgetary constraints, but Discretionary Payments are.

- 3.4 Discretionary Payments are limited by a budget allocated by a government grant of £6,452.31. The Council will not be able to fund a Discretionary Payment once this has been spent.
- 3.5 Individuals are not eligible for a payment if they have been furloughed.
- 3.6 Individuals are not eligible for a payment if they are self-isolating because they have travelled to the UK from a country that requires self-isolation upon entry to the UK (commonly known as quarantine).

4.0 SUPPORT PAYMENT - ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 4.1 In order to be eligible for a Support Payment, an applicant must meet all of the following criteria:
- Be resident in Rutland;
 - Have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace either because they've 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;
 - 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, and
 - Has not already received a Support Payment in respect of their current period of self-isolation.

5.0 DISCRETIONARY PAYMENT – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 5.1 If an applicant is not eligible for a Support Payment, they may be eligible for a Discretionary Payment instead. Applicants must meet **all** of the following criteria:
- Be resident in Rutland;
 - Have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace either because they've 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;
 - Have not already received a Support Payment in respect of their current period of self-isolation; and
 - Be able to demonstrate the need for financial assistance as detailed at 5.2.
- 5.2 In addition to the above, in order to be considered for a Discretionary Payment an applicant must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- **Not** in receipt of Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit;
 - Usually have maximum earnings of no more than £250 per week (gross);
 - Usually work 16 hours or more per week;
 - Have savings of less than £1,000;
 - Be responsible for paying rent/mortgage;
 - Have seen a drop in income of at least 25%;
 - Be able to demonstrate exceptional circumstances not otherwise outlined in this policy, at the discretion of the Council.
- 5.3 In determining eligibility, the household income and expenditure will be taken into account. Applicants may be asked to complete an income and expenditure form and provide evidence.
- 5.4 Applicants who usually have no recourse to public funds *may* be considered, providing they meet all of the criteria detailed at 5.2.

6.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 6.1 Applications must be made and completed within 14 days of the last day of your period of self-isolating ending. For example:
- You first experienced Covid-19 symptoms on 1st October, are tested on 3rd October and receive a positive test result on 5th October and are notified of your unique 8 digit Test & Trace reference number. Your period of self-isolation runs for 10 days, from 1st October to 11th October. The last date you could submit a completed application would be 25th October.
 - You are contacted by the Test & Trace team on 8th October, informing you that you were in contact with an individual who has subsequently received a positive Covid-19 test and providing your unique 8 digit Test & Trace reference number. Your registered contact was on 4th October, and your period of self-isolation runs for 14 days, from 4th October to 18th October. The last date you could submit a completed application would be 1st November.
- 6.2 Applications made later than the time frame outlined at 5.1 will be rejected.
- 6.3 If an applicant is unable to complete the online form, an application can be made by telephone by calling 01572 722577. An advisor will take some basic details and an officer will make contact to complete the application form.
- 6.4 We will not consider that a valid application has been made until:

- a completed form has been submitted;
 - all evidence requested has been provided;
 - we can verify your unique test and trace reference number;
 - we can verify your bank account details; and
 - we can verify your entitlement to state benefits.
- 6.5 Where practicable, a decision will be made within 3 working days.
- 6.6 Applications can be made by the applicant themselves or someone else acting on the applicant's behalf i.e. Power of Attorney.
- 6.7 We will accept referrals by email to enquiries@rutland.gov.uk from:
- Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority;
 - Leicestershire Police Authority;
 - Rutland citizens Advice Bureau; and
 - Other third sector organisations.
- 6.8 We will provide a written notice of our decision by email if possible, or by post if this is not possible. For Discretionary Payments this will include:
- A summary of the factors considered in reaching the decision;
 - If unsuccessful, details of how to request a review.

7.0 EVIDENCE

- 7.1 We will ask for the following evidence in order to verify applicant's identity and ensure that the eligibility criteria are met:
- a notification from NHS Test and Trace asking the applicant to self-isolate (this will include a Unique 8 digit ID number);
 - a bank statement; and
 - proof of employment, or, for self-employed; evidence of self-assessment returns, trading income and proof that the business delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact.
- 7.2 Additional evidence will be requested for Discretionary Payment Applications. This will be limited to the relevant circumstances to demonstrate the need for financial assistance.
- 7.3 Evidence should be provided with the application form. If this is not possible it can be emailed to enquiries@rutland.gov.uk. If evidence is being provided by email please provide your application number. Scanned or photographed evidence is acceptable.
- 7.4 If evidence cannot be provided the application will be rejected.

8.0 PAYMENTS

- 8.1 Payments will be made directly into the applicant's bank account by BACS with 3 working days of an eligible application being made.
- 8.2 No payment will be made unless the applicants name matches that of the bank statement provided with the application.
- 8.3 Payment cannot be made to a third party.
- 8.4 If the applicants bank account is overdrawn details will be provided to advise the applicant to submit an appropriation of funds request to their bank.
- 8.5 If the applicant doesn't have a bank account a payment can be made by cheque as a last resort.
- 8.6 All payments are taxable and will be reported to HMRC.

9.0 APPEALS

- 9.1 There is no automatic right of appeal against a decision not to award a payment. However, an applicant can ask for a decision to refuse a grant to be reviewed.
- 9.2 Requests for a review of the decision must be:
 - Submitted in writing to enquires@rutland.gov.uk
 - Received within one calendar month of the date of the decision notice;
 - Outline the reasons for requesting the review; and
 - Provide new supporting evidence.
- 9.3 Request for review will be consider by the Strategic Director for Resources and this decision will be final.
- 9.4 Request for review will be determined within 10 working days of receipt of the request and the applicant will be notified in writing.
- 9.5 No review will be considered if:
 - The request is received later than one calendar month of the date of the decision:
 - There is no clear evidence that a significant wrong decision was made:

- The decision has already been reviewed:
- The decision related to the Discretionary Fund and the funding has been exhausted; and
- There are no reasons stated or new evidence given to indicate that the original decision was incorrect.

10.0 POST PAYMENT CHECKS, FRAUD AND ERROR

- 10.1 The Council will be undertaking post payment checks and may ask recipients to demonstrate a loss of income through providing evidence. Where this cannot be demonstrated, payments will be recovered.
- 10.2 If it is subsequently identified that a payment has been awarded as a result of false or fraudulent information, including the claiming of duplicate award, we reserve the right to withdraw the award, recover the payment and report it to the police.
- 10.3 If the applicant fails to self-isolate in accordance with the NHS Test and Trace request, we reserve the right to withdraw the award, recover the payment and report it to the police.

11.0 MONITORING AND REPORTING

- 11.1 We will operate the scheme under Government guidelines.
- 11.2 We will record and monitor the number and amounts of payments made. We will closely monitor the Discretionary Payments to ensure the funding allocation is not overspent.

**A large print version of this document is
available on request**



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