**Test and Trace Support Payments for parents and guardians**

The Test and Trace Support Payment scheme is being extended to parents and guardians who are not legally required to self-isolate, but who need to take time off work to look after a child or young person who is self-isolating. It will apply where the child or young person has been told to self-isolate **on or after 8 March 2021.**

**Eligibility**

To be eligible for a Test and Trace Support payment of £500, they need to satisfy **ALL** of the following criteria:

* 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 that child or young person whilst they self-isolate
* The parent or guardian is:
  + not required to self-isolate (if the parent / guardian has to self-isolate, they can claim a payment in their own right)
  + employed or self-employed
  + cannot work from home while undertaking caring responsibilities and will lose income as a result.
  + currently receiving, or the partner of someone receiving one of the following qualifying benefits; Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance (IR), Jobseeker’s Allowance (IB), Income Support, Housing Benefit or Pension Credit. The partner must be living in the same household.
* the child or young person that is self-isolating:
  + is aged 15 or under (or 25 or under with an Education, Health and Care Plan) 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.

The payment is limited to one parent or guardian per household for the child or young person’s self-isolation period. If there is another parent or guardian in the household who can care for the child or young person, for example where one parent can work from home, they are not eligible for the payment.

If they are not eligible for a Test and Trace Support Payment because they do not receive one of the qualifying benefits, they may be eligible for a discretionary payment.

**Eligibility for a Discretionary Payment**

If they are not eligible for a Test and Trace Support Payment because they do not receive one of the qualifying benefits, they may be eligible for a discretionary payment. This will apply where they are on a low income and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are taking time off work to care for a child or young person whilst they self-isolate

**Making an Application**

Applications will be made using the same online process that already exists for Test and Trace Support Payments. The application form is currently being updated to accept applications for Test and Trace Support Payments for parents and guardians. This should be available from 7 April 2021.

An application can be made up to 42 days after the child or young person’s first day of self-isolation. The claim should be made online at [www.bolton.gov.uk/coronavirus-support-1/test-trace-payments](http://www.bolton.gov.uk/coronavirus-support-1/test-trace-payments)

**Contacting the education or care setting to check the child or young person’s details**

To determine eligibility, a number of checks will need to be carried out by the LA before payment can be made to the parent or guardian. One of these checks is for the LA to contact the education or care setting to check the child or young person’s details. This is the last check that is carried out before payment can be made.

We will contact the education or care setting by telephone or email to confirm the following information:

* 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 any communication that the parent or guardian has provided from the education or care setting is genuine

Applicants will be informed as part of the application process that we will be contacting the education or care setting to confirm this information. It is very important that this information is provided as it is required to confirm eligibility for the payment.

**Frequently asked questions**

**Can we pay parents and guardians who have to take time off work because the education or care setting has closed?**

No. we can only pay parents or guardians who are taking time off work to look after a child or young person who is self-isolating because they have been identified as a recent contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

**Can we pay parents and guardians who have a job that can normally be done from home but who need to take time off to care for the child or young person?**

No. As with a normal application for a Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary payment, applicants will need to prove that they have a job that cannot be undertaken from home.

**Can we pay an applicant if the child or young person was self-isolating on 8 March 2021 but whose period of self-isolation began before that?**

No, applications are open to parents and guardians if the child or young person’s first day of self-isolation was 8 March 2021 or later. If the first day of self-isolation was before 8 March 2021, the parent or guardian is not eligible.

**Can we pay parents and guardians of children and young people who are self-isolating with symptoms?**

No. This extension is for parents and guardians who are self-isolating because they have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. We cannot pay applicants if the child or young person is self-isolating with symptoms.

If the child or young person subsequently tests positive for COVID-19, parents and guardians in the same household will be classed as household contacts and be required to self-isolate – meaning they can then claim for the payment in the usual way, provided they meet all the eligibility criteria.

**Can we pay an applicant if the child or young person was self-isolating on 8 March 2021 but whose period of self-isolation began before that?**

No, applications are open to parents and guardians if the child or young person’s first day of self-isolation was 8 March 2021 or later. If the first day of self-isolation was before 8 March 2021, the parent or guardian is not eligible.

**What are the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) implications if we have to contact education and care settings to verify the self-declared information that applicants provide?**

The GDPR implications for the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme remain the same as they did previously: you should continue to handle applicants’ data in accordance with GDPR.

Education and care settings may need to update their own privacy notices and we are working with the Department for Education to support them to do this.