

Test and Trace Support Payment and Discretionary Fund

Questions Log (Version 0.5; Wednesday, 6 October 2020)

General

Regarding the Discretionary Test & Trace Scheme is there any update on when individual funding allocations will be confirmed please?

These were published by MHCLG on Friday 2/10 and shared with local authority Chief Executives and S151 officers.

What is the legal basis for LAs using Test and Trace data?

We are satisfied that LAs can legally use Test and Trace data to administer the scheme. Further guidance dealing specifically with data sharing and the legal basis for doing this will be provided to local authorities in due course.

Will there be national communications, in addition to any local ones?

Yes, the NHS Test and Trace Support payment was announced by the Prime Minister on Sunday, 20 September 2020, and a national communications campaign will publicise the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme.

We will work with you and share material to help inform your local campaign. It is important that this scheme is publicised and targeted at those who may be eligible, so that people are encouraged to order a test if they display symptoms, and to stay at home and self-isolate if instructed to do so.

There is currently a demand on testing, it could be that people lose income before any tests and subsequent results are received; how is this being provisioned for?

Both the £500 payment (for eligible individuals) and the legal duty to self-isolate will apply only where someone has tested positive or has been notified that they are the close contact of someone who has tested positive.

Where a symptomatic person orders a test, then – provided the test is taken within five days – the period for which they must self-isolate, if they test positive, will be ten days from the date of their first symptom onset. The length of time (within the five-day period) before taking a test and the length of time to get test results will not affect the period for which they are legally obliged to self-isolate. Where a symptomatic person tests negative, we appreciate that delays in testing will extend the period for which they have had to self-isolate (by virtue of guidance rather than legal duty), but it would be impracticable to offer financial support to everyone self-isolating because they have symptoms. We are continuing to expand testing capacity, with the aim of having capacity for 500,000 daily tests by the end of October, in order to meet increases in demand.

Is NHS Test and Trace now in a position to contact all of those that may have been in contact with an individual? If not, when will it be; if not imminently what is the contingency?

NHS Test and Trace contacts everyone named as a close contact for whom we have usable contact details. Some of those who we attempt to contact (currently around 20%) do not respond to repeated phone calls (or emails, if we do not have a phone number), but they still receive a message telling them they need to self-isolate. There is no contingency for the scenario where someone has been in close contact but has not been named as a close contact or we do not have usable contact details; equally, those individuals will not be under a legal duty to self-isolate. The legal duty to self-isolate will only arise where someone has been notified that they are the contact of someone who has tested positive.

Policy

Will we have clear qualifying criteria and specifics on how we will confirm eligibility?

The qualifying criteria are:

- 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.

Can an individual claim more than once? If so, is the process the same as for initial claim?

Yes, provided the eligibility criteria are met on each separate occasion and the self-isolation period for which they are claiming doesn't overlap with a previous self-isolation period. The process should be the same as for any other claim.

What about multiple claims from households – will this be allowed?

Yes, provided each applicant meets the relevant criteria.

The guidelines suggest there must be a positive contact from NHS Test and Trace to qualify for payment, what if someone hasn't been contacted, but are self-isolating (correctly)? Who and how do they contact to obtain the relevant registration detail?

The duty to self-isolate – and eligibility for payment – applies only where someone has been formally notified to self-isolate, either because they have received a positive test result or because a person who has tested positive has identified them as a contact. This does put the onus on people who have tested positive to share accurate information about their recent contacts. It would not be appropriate to pay someone who has simply been told by a friend

that they ought to self-isolate, without that friend having formally notified NHS Test and Trace who their contacts are (for which they will be under a legal duty not to knowingly provide false information). The legal duty – and the payments – also do not apply to people isolating because they or another member of their household has symptoms.

How do these payments work for furloughed workers?

People who have been furloughed can claim the payment, provided they meet all the eligibility criteria.

Some people will be furloughed but still working part-time. If they cannot do their part-time job from home while self-isolating, and will lose income as a result, they will be eligible for the scheme provided they meet the other eligibility criteria.

Given the time lag in people getting test results, what about payments for those who may be required to self-isolate for several days before getting a test result if the test is then negative? Are they entitled to any financial support? What if the applicant has symptoms but is unable to access a test?

They will not be entitled to the Test and Trace Support Payment if they order a test and the result is negative, as one of the eligibility criteria is that the individual has 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.

If the individual is unable to work from home, they may qualify for other financial support during this period of self-isolation.

How long will the scheme be expected to last for?

The scheme will initially last until 31 January 2021. We will review during this period whether and in what form the scheme should be continued beyond that date.

Are students eligible for the payments (either for the main Test and Trace Support Payment or for the discretionary payments)?

The Test and Trace Support Payment has been set up to support people on low incomes who are employed or self-employed and cannot work from home while they self-isolate. Students can claim from the scheme provided they meet the eligibility criteria. In practice, most will not be eligible.

Is there anything that we can do to support parents that are looking after young children with covid and cannot work without this being a discretionary consideration? Are children recorded on the test and trace database?

NHS Test and Trace does trace the contacts of under 18s, so parents of a child with COVID-19 would be on the CTAS database if that child's contacts had been shared with NHS Test and Trace (and their parents would therefore be able to claim the payment if they met the other eligibility criteria). The Test and Trace Support Payment scheme is specifically for people

on low incomes who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and can't work from home, and it doesn't cover parents who have not themselves been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

Can you confirm that an App notification to self-isolate on its own does not mean they will be eligible for the Test & Trace support payment.

Currently, people will not be able to claim the Test and Trace Support Payment with an App notification. This is because there is no way to verify people who have been asked to self-isolate via the App on CTAS. DHSC is examining practical solutions that would allow people using the App to be included in the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, but this will not be in place for 12 October.

Can you confirm that someone on SSP wouldn't be eligible as they are losing income due to them being off work sick rather than because they are isolating (even if the illness is Covid and they have to self isolate).

Applicants can receive a £500 payment on top of SSP, provided they meet all the eligibility criteria. Therefore, if someone is off sick because of COVID-19 and is receiving SSP, they could still claim a £500 payment, provided they could prove they had been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and met all the other eligibility criteria.

Funding and cost/volume estimates

What are our estimates of likely take-up under different scenarios?

If COVID-19 incidence remains flat at levels seen in September, our modelling estimates that 800 people per day in England will receive the payment. This is highly sensitive to changes in COVID-19 transmission: for example, if incidence is five times the modelling estimate, we could expect 4,000 claims a day across the country.

Is it possible to have an estimate of numbers for each borough to help with planning?

This will be dependent on COVID-19 transmission levels in each area. As noted in the response to question 15, the current estimate is that 800 people per day across England will be eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment. If these cases were distributed evenly across the country, a local authority with 250,000 residents could expect four people per day to become eligible (and 20 people per day if incidence is five times the current level).

Local authorities should be prepared to receive a large number of unsuccessful applicants for the Test and Trace Support Payment (though based on experience in the pilot, you should use an application form that whittles out ineligible applicants, prior to allowing these individuals to submit their evidence). These people may, however, qualify for the discretionary fund.

At the start of the scheme, local authorities should also be prepared for a backlog of cases to work through.

How much funding will local authorities receive? When/how will they receive this?

The UK Government will provide funding to support local authorities in implementing the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. This includes both administrative costs (set-up costs and running costs) and the costs of the payments made under the scheme.

In total, the UK Government will provide £50 million for the Test and Trace Support Payment and corresponding discretionary payments. This will cover the full four months of the scheme until 31 January 2021 and includes:

- **£25 million** for programme costs (costs of payments to applicants), excluding discretionary payments.
- **£10 million** for administration costs.
- **£15 million** for discretionary payments.

The £25 million and £10 million are both 'down-payments' based on expected programme and administration costs.

The £25 million programme costs will be subject to reconciliation, which could mean an authority may need to return funding if the number of payments made is less than their allocation. Other local authorities may need a top up payment where they make payments that exceed their initial allocation.

The £10 million for administrative cost is not subject to a reconciliation process. Additional funding may be provided as necessary, informed by the experience of the programme. The administrative funding has been designed to cover the estimated costs of both setting up the scheme and running the scheme, but it will not be possible to match funding to the specific costs incurred by individual local authorities.

The £15 million for discretionary payments is a fixed four-month envelope that will not be topped up or subject to a reconciliation process.

Distribution

The funding will be distributed to individual local authorities as follows:

The £25 million for programme costs

- The **£25 million for programme costs** will be initially distributed according to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)'s COVID-19 Relative Need Formula (RNF). Details on the formula can be found [here](#).
- We have created a 'floor' so that each local authority will receive at least £21,000 of the full pot. Each local authority allocation has been rounded to match a multiple of £500 (as each eligible applicant will receive £500).
- This fund will be reconciled, which means that any money that is overspent or underspent compared to the initial allocation that a local authority receives will be topped up or repaid respectively.

The £10 million for administration costs

- Each local authority will receive £20,000 from the **£10 million for administration costs**, plus a share of the remaining £3.72 million in the pot once each local authority has been given £20,000. The share of the remaining £3.72 million will be allocated to each local authority according to their share of the pot for programme costs. This is based on evidence from the pilot which indicated a £20,000 fixed cost for setting up the scheme.

The £15 million for discretionary payments

- The **£15 million for discretionary payments** has been allocated according to the COVID-19 RNF for 313 of the 314 lower tier local authorities (with a 'top slice' for the 314th local authority, the Isles of Scilly - which does not normally receive an allocation from the RNF – based on the estimated proportion of the population of England that lives there).
- The whole pot has been distributed up front, and it will not be subject to a reconciliation process (meaning that it will not be topped up or reclaimed if local authorities overspend or underspend their allocation from the pot).

Will government funding cover any software development/additional functionality which may be needed to administer this scheme?

Central government will cover the administration of the scheme. Local authorities will be able to cover the cost of any additional software that may be needed from the down-payment on expected programme costs that we expect HM Treasury to provide. Given expected volumes, we do not anticipate that local authorities will need to procure software to enable automated processing of applications.

How are we assessing how much administration costs will be?

A down-payment of £10 million is being provided for administration costs, to be distributed across all LAs.

Making and receiving applications

Can we have early sight of the actual forms and processes used by the pilot sites?

We have shared a form that you can use, should you wish – and this can be seen in the guidance that has been circulated to all local authorities in England.

If you decide to produce your own application, you can use the template that has been shared by colleagues in Oldham. Colleagues from Blackburn with Darwen have also shared a design template to inform your process.

Have the pilots encountered any difficulties in people supplying evidence due to them being confined at home?

This hasn't been an issue in the pilot as individuals uploaded information electronically. Local authorities should put arrangements in place to enable this wherever possible. As some applicants will be unable to access a scanner, this should include accepting photographs of documents in lieu of a scan.

This does not mean that local authorities will not encounter difficulties in people supplying evidence as part of the national roll-out. We will continue to maintain working groups so that if this issue does arise, a potential solution can be discussed and resolved collectively.

Have the pilots encountered other support needs from people applying? If so what and how have these been addressed?

This wasn't encountered via the online application forms, but colleagues from the three pilot areas are checking if applicants raised this via the telephone application process.

As part of the information available on your local authority page and in the design process, please reference the support that is available in your authority for people who have been instructed to self-isolate, e.g., discretionary payments, food packages, check-in calls, etc.

What technology have the pilots used to assess / record applications?

A web form and spreadsheet was used to assess and record applications.

Will we need to get software suppliers to make changes to our systems to allow automated processing?

We do not anticipate any need to have a system that requires automated processing, given the likely volumes, and we do not anticipate it would be possible in any case to make those kind of changes within the available timeframe for initial implementation (from 28 September 2020, and no later than 12 October 2020).

Is the standard payment of £500 regardless of how much they lose in income? Definition of what loss of income would be useful.

This payment is for working people on low incomes who will lose income because they cannot work from home while self-isolating. People will receive £500 as a lump sum, regardless of how much they have lost in income.

As long as someone meets the other eligibility criteria and is losing income because they have been told to self-isolate and cannot work from home, they can claim. For example:

- someone with a single job whose employer continued to pay them a full wage while they self-isolated would not be eligible.
- someone whose employer paid them a reduced wage while they self-isolated would be eligible (they have lost income).

- someone with two part-time jobs who continued to be paid a full wage by one employer, but whose other employer did not pay them while self-isolating, would be eligible. Again, they have lost income.

Pre-payment checks

Are you expecting a deadline to be set for applicants to provide all the necessary verification

If possible, local authorities should work with applicants to make sure they provide the necessary evidence to support a successful application. For instance, someone who is self-employed may have forgotten to provide their self-assessment return in the first instance. This person should not be rejected but given an opportunity to provide further evidence if they have it.

Will LAs have to register individual users for the CTAS system?

LAs will need to register individual users for the Eligibility Checker for checking NHS Test and Trace Account IDs stored on the CTAS system. There is information on how to do this in the Implementation Guidance.

Checking that applicant is receiving one of qualifying benefits

Do DWP have backlogs? The underlying qualifier is a DWP benefit, why is this being administered by LAs not DWP who have first-hand access to the data?

If the applicant met all the other eligibility criteria but wasn't yet in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits, a local authority could choose to pay them from the discretionary fund (depending on the final criteria and the parameters of the discretionary fund).

One of the eligibility requirements is entitlement to benefits, with most of these DWP benefits. However, local authorities will need to assess the other eligibility criteria too, such as being instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

We will work with you to ensure the necessary data sharing agreements are in place for you to have access to the relevant systems so that you can administer the Test and Trace Support payment.

Will you speak to HB system suppliers to see if generic solutions could be developed for LAs?

Local authorities should use their existing systems to check if someone is receiving housing benefit. A generic solution will not be pursued.

What if it transpires that a local authority has made a payment to someone who was in receipt of a specified benefit but shouldn't have been?

Local authorities will have the right to recoup any payments paid to someone they discover has claimed the £500 fraudulently. They should approach this in the normal way they would recoup other costs from residents.

What if someone who is self-isolating later finds out they were eligible for a benefit that would have qualified them for the Test and Trace Support Payment?

The individual could not make a retrospective claim. If the individual is facing financial hardship, local authorities may decide to deploy the discretionary fund (the criteria and the parameters of the discretionary fund are being finalised).

What happens if applicant is awaiting the outcome of their application for a qualifying benefit? What if DWP have backlogs? What happens if applicant has an outstanding appeal against a decision not to award UC/WTC?

If the applicant met all the other eligibility criteria but wasn't yet in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits, a local authority could choose to pay them from the discretionary fund.

Checking that applicant has been formally instructed to self-isolate

Can we identify UPRN in CTAS to be clear about which Borough is responsible (we believe not currently from what we've seen of the CTAS data schema)?

This won't be possible with the data available on CTAS.

If someone tests positive in a setting other than via the national testing programme, e.g. hospital, pre-op assessment, will Test & Trace manage any self-isolations for their contacts, or is this dealt with in a different way?

All positive test results (regardless of setting) should be notified to Public Health England (PHE) and then automatically enter the contact tracing process.

However, one of the challenges we need to address is in cases that are escalated to Tier 1 (PHE health protection team and/or local authority Director of Public Health), e.g., hospitals, care homes, prisons. The relevant public health team will provide advice to the relevant setting, but the notification to self-isolate will typically come from the employer/establishment in question – and Tier 1 does not currently collect names, contact details or isolation start/end dates for these notifications. To enable these people to be eligible, we will need to determine a way of enabling the relevant employer/establishment to provide confirmation that they were instructed to self-isolate.

If an individual is named as a contact by two different people testing positive, will they have a unique reference number for each instance? Resulting in the possibility of two separate claims.

Yes. However, claims are not allowed for overlapping self-isolation periods – an individual can receive a maximum of £500 for a period of isolation.

This includes someone who has to isolate for a continuous period of (say) 20 days, either because they have been identified as the contact of a second positive case within the same period or because they have gone on to test positive and have had to start a new 10-day isolation period. Only one claim can be made for this period.

What does encourage, educate and support compliance mean operationally?

Local authorities should reiterate the message that people should get tested, share accurate information about their recent contacts with NHS Test and Trace, and self-isolate when asked to do so in order to protect their friends, families and communities. You should also refer people to the relevant support available for people who are self-isolating. These messages should be communicated as part of the application process for the payment and during local authorities' regular interactions with residents.

Checking employment/self-employment details

What information is sought from what sources to verify employment/self-employment? Is this solely the applicant?

Applicants will be asked to provide proof of employment or, if they are self-employed, evidence of self-assessment returns and trading income. In the case of self-employed applicants, local authorities will need to be satisfied with evidence of the self-assessment returns and trading income provided.

Making payments

Will we be required to issue formal award letters, or can awards/failed claims be notified by other means (e.g. email/text)? If formal award letters are required, presumably costs involved in production/postage will be covered by Gov't funding?

Yes – you should notify applicants that they are eligible and will be receiving a payment. As part of this letter, you should also highlight the other support that is available in your authority for people who are self-isolating. Central government will cover the administration of the scheme, including letters to confirm an individual is eligible and receiving a payment.

Have the pilots encountered any problems regarding people unable to access bank accounts and, if so, how have these been addressed?

This was not an issue in the pilot scheme as payments were made to the bank account matching the bank statement provided by each claimant as part of their proof of eligibility.

What advice should local authorities provide if an individual is overdrawn?

If you identify someone who is overdrawn, you may wish to advise the individual to contact their bank to exercise their first right of appropriation and ensure the money isn't used to pay the overdraft.

The recipient would have to write a letter to the bank to explain that they were expecting a £500 payment (the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment), and how they would like to spend the money. This protection is called a 'first right of appropriation of funds order'.

Guidance from Bradford Council and an example template can be seen in this [link](#). You may also wish to produce a similar template that you can share with eligible individuals who are overdrawn.

The guidance should be clear that it is only LAs' responsibility to sort out making payments – not to help recipients with overdraft issues.

It is up to the local authority to decide how to support people who may be overdrawn. For example, you may wish to direct applicants to information about how to exercise their first right of appropriation to the £500 payment, so their bank does not use it to cover their overdraft. You may also wish to produce a template for a 'first right of appropriation of funds order' that you can share with eligible individuals who are overdrawn.

However, this is not part of the scheme, and it is a decision for the local authority.

Can you confirm what will happen if LA's get more Valid applications than the allocation amount.

The funding that the Treasury have made available for this scheme is split into three pots:

- £25 million for the programme costs of the main scheme
- £10 million for administration costs
- £15 million for discretionary payments

The £25 million programme costs will be subject to reconciliation, which could mean an authority may need to return funding if the number of payments made is less than their allocation. Other local authorities may need a top up payment where they make payments that exceed their initial allocation.

The £10 million for administrative cost is not subject to a reconciliation process. Additional funding may be provided as necessary, informed by the experience of the programme. The administrative funding has been designed to cover the estimated costs of both setting up the scheme and running the scheme, but it will not be possible to match funding to the specific costs incurred by individual local authorities.

The £15 million for discretionary payments is a fixed four-month envelope that will not be topped up or subject to a reconciliation process.

We have some people who do not have bank accounts, I assume in this case cheque payments are acceptable?

It is up to each local authority to decide on the most appropriate arrangements for paying recipients who do not have a bank account.

What payment system has been used – BACS or faster payments – and are you able to verify bank details and if so by what method?

For the pilot scheme, a faster payments system was used. This may be difficult for some local authorities, and it may have wider resource implications for others. It is up to each local authority to decide on which payment system to use, though you should aim to pay eligible individuals within three working days of their application being verified.

Appeals

Will there be a requirement to give a right of appeal against each decision? If so, what process will they follow?

As per the pilot scheme, there will be no requirement to provide a right of appeal. People who are turned down will not be eligible because they don't meet the criteria.

However, the three authorities who took part in the pilot scheme worked with applicants to make sure they provided the necessary evidence to support a successful application. For example, an individual who was self-employed may have forgotten to provide their self-assessment return in the first instance. This individual shouldn't be rejected, but given the opportunity to provide further evidence, if available.

If an applicant is rejected because they do not meet the eligibility criteria, local authorities may choose to pay the individual from the discretionary fund (depending on the final criteria and the parameters of the discretionary fund).

Implications for benefits entitlement

How will Universal Credit be impacted, if there is a loss of earned income?

The NHS Test and Trace Support Payments will be disregarded when calculating entitlement to Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit or Pension Credit.

Design of discretionary fund

Can we have a commitment to review discretionary funding at regular intervals

We will be providing more information to local authorities about how we will evaluate the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme over its four-month life span to 31 January 2021: this will include regular review points. The £15 million made available for discretionary funding is a

fixed envelope to cover the four months to 31 January, which means that it will not be topped up.

Will payments from the discretionary fund also be subject to income tax? What about NICs?

Discretionary payments under the scheme will receive the same tax treatment as the main Test and Trace Support Payments: they will be subject to income tax but exempt from NICs.

Can councils make payments from the discretionary fund on a sliding scale rather than single payments of £500?

Discretionary payments will remain at £500 to ensure consistency in approach across all LAs.

How do we check that people applying for the discretionary fund and not on one of the benefits are definitely on a low income? E.g. someone who has just claimed for UC the same day – may not be eligible for UC, how do we check.

Local authorities do not need to verify that someone who is receiving a discretionary payment is on a low income; rather, they need to be satisfied that the person will face hardship if they have to self-isolate because they cannot work (and that they meet the other eligibility criteria to receive a discretionary payment).

Local authorities can add extra eligibility criteria for discretionary payments in their area if they wish. If so, it is up to them to consider what extra evidence may be required as proof that applicants meet these criteria.

Other

Any general lessons learned from the pilot?

Local authorities should:

- be clear to that applicants must provide an eight-digit NHS Test and Trace number – not a number from the Isolation Note service.
- use an application form that whittles out ineligible applicants, prior to allowing these individuals to submit their evidence. This will help to reduce the administrative burden on local authorities.
- help people to submit the right evidence, e.g., if an individual has forgotten to attach their bank statement or self-assessment return.

Who will be liable for any fraudulent claims?

Local authorities will be able to recover costs from people who claim the payment fraudulently. They will be able to keep recovered money to put towards their ongoing costs of running the scheme. They will not be liable for any irrecoverable costs due to fraud.

Will there be an audit requirement / what management information (MI) will local authorities be asked to provide? What evidence will we need to keep and what is an external auditor likely to require? We should be making sure that LAs can design their application form so that this is collected.

This information is included in Section 9 of the Implementation Guidance.

Does this exclude a person with no resource to public funds?

Local authorities can, if they wish, make discretionary payments to people who meet the other eligibility criteria but aren't in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits and will face hardship while self-isolating because they cannot go to work. This could include people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

Does it need to be a named individual with access to the Eligibility Checker, or can a generic mailbox be given access to allow teams to process claims rather than just one or two staff members?

Only named individuals can be given access to the Eligibility Checker.

Will the discretionary guidance make it clear that an award can only be made where a there is a T&T number, the applicant is working and cannot work from home?

Yes. The section on eligibility for the discretionary fund sets out that local authorities can make a £500 discretionary payment 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.

These people must also meet the following criteria:

- they 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; and
- they will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating.

Local authorities can add other criteria to determine eligibility for discretionary payments if they wish, as long as these criteria function in addition to the criteria above and not instead of them.

Will tomorrow's guidance specify what level of disruption to an applicant's job/employer (e.g. total shutdown or 'affected by COVID?') would be required to make an applicant eligible?

Disruption to an applicant's job or employer is not one of the factors that is considered when determining whether or not they are eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment or for a discretionary payment.

How will we verify that someone is unable to work from home? Or that their income is reduced? And do they just have to have a reduction in income no matter how small?

The application form should ask applicants to confirm both that they cannot work from home while they are self-isolating and that they will have a reduction in earned income because they are self-isolating.

As long as someone meets the other eligibility criteria and is losing income because they have been told to self-isolate and cannot work from home, they are eligible. So, for example:

- someone with a single job whose employer continued to pay them a full wage while they self-isolated would not be eligible.
- someone whose employer paid them a reduced wage while they self-isolated would be eligible (they have lost income).
- someone with two part-time jobs who continued to be paid a full wage by one employer, but whose other employer did not pay them while self-isolating, would be eligible.

Is there a time limit when people can apply?

Eligible individuals can make a claim up to 14 days after their period of self-isolation ended. Local authorities should not accept applications after this point: for example, if someone was told to self-isolate until 10 October, they would have until 24 October to make a claim.

Do applicants need to apply themselves or can others apply on their behalf?

Applicants can apply on behalf of someone else. However, the £500 must be paid into a bank account in the name of the person for whom the application is being made (so, for example, if someone applied on behalf of a parent, the payment would be made into the parent's bank account).