



# CHELTENHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Notice of a meeting of Cabinet

**Tuesday, 13 October 2020**

**6.00 pm**

**Virtual WEBEX video conference via YouTube -  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/cheltenhamborough>**

<b>Membership</b>	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Steve Jordan, Victoria Atherstone, Flo Clucas, Chris Coleman, Rowena Hay, Alex Hegenbarth, Peter Jeffries, Andrew McKinlay and Max Wilkinson

## Agenda

<b>8.</b>	<b>DISCRETIONARY TEST AND TRACE SUPPORT PAYMENT SCHEME</b> Report of the Cabinet Member Finance	(Pages 3 - 46)

**Contact Officer:** Bev Thomas, Democratic Services Team Leader, 01242 264246  
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## Cheltenham Borough Council

**Cabinet – 13 October 2020**

### Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Rowena Hay, Cabinet Member Finance</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Jayne Gilpin, Head of Revenues and Benefits</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key/Significant Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>As part of its support measures in response to COVID-19 on 20th September 2020 the Government announced a Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme to be administered by Councils. The scheme will assist people on low incomes who are legally required to self-isolate and will lose income as a result. The scheme is fully funded by the Government.</p> <p>In addition to the standard scheme prescribed by Government funding has been provided for the Council to administer a Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme. The discretionary scheme is aimed at providing support to those who do not qualify for the standard scheme but will lose income and suffer financial hardship as a result of being required to self-isolate. The Government is also providing funding for this scheme.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>Cabinet is recommended to</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Approve the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme in Appendix 2 which will be in place until 31 January 2021, subject to funding being available</b></li> <li><b>2. Delegate authority to the Head of Revenues and Benefits to take decisions relating to applications made under the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme</b></li> <li><b>3. Authorises the Head of Revenues and Benefits in consultation with the Cabinet Member Finance to make changes to the Discretionary Scheme in line with any changes made by Government, or, as required to ensure the successful operation of the scheme.</b></li> <li><b>4. Note the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme in appendix 3 and delegate authority to the Head of Revenues and Benefits to take decisions relating to applications</b></li> <li><b>5. Authorises the Cabinet Member Finance to extend the Discretionary Scheme beyond 31 January 2021 in line with Government direction and subject to funding being available</b></li> </ol>

<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>As detailed within the report, Central Government is providing this Council with £40,500 to fund the standard Test and Trace Support Payment scheme and £25,000 to fund a discretionary scheme between 12 October 2020 and 31 January 2021.</p> <p>The Government has indicated that funding for the discretionary scheme is a finite sum and no more funding will be available between now and 31 January 2021.</p> <p>Any unspent standard scheme funding will have to be returned to Government but unspent discretionary scheme funding can be retained by the Council.</p> <p>As the funding is limited the discretionary scheme will be closed if the funding has been allocated prior to 31 January 2021.</p> <p>The schemes will only be extended beyond 31 January if this is directed by Government and the appropriate funding is made available</p> <p>New burdens funding will be provided in respect of the administration costs for both the standard and the discretionary scheme.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Paul Jones</b> <b>paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 775154</b></p>
<b>Legal implications</b>	<p>There are no legal implications arising directly as a result of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Lorna Lucas</b> <b>Lorna.lucas@teWKesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272</b></p>
<b>HR implications (including learning and organisational development)</b>	<p>There are none associated with this report</p>
<b>Key risks</b>	<p><b>See appendix 1</b></p>
<b>Corporate and community plan Implications</b>	
<b>Environmental and climate change implications</b>	<p>None</p>
<b>Property/Asset Implications</b>	<p>There is nothing in this report which impacts on Council properties</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk</b></p>

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Legislation came in to force on 28 September 2020 requiring people to self-isolate due to testing positive for coronavirus or having been in close contact with someone who tested positive and are instructed to do so by NHS Test and Trace.
- 1.2 On 20 September 2020 the Government announced the Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 to provide support to people who, from 28 September 2020 are required by law to self-isolate, are on lower incomes and have lost income as a result. The payment will be subject to income tax.
- 1.3 Residents of Cheltenham will be eligible if they have been instructed by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate, are employed or self-employed, are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and are in receipt of certain benefits.
- 1.4 This Council has received funding of £40,500 to cover standard scheme payments up to 31 January 2021. This will be topped up if payments exceed the allocation. If payments made are less than the allocation then unspent funds will need to be returned.
- 1.5 In addition to the standard scheme the Government has provided funding to Councils for a discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme
- 1.6 Funding of £25,000 has been received to cover discretionary scheme payments up to 31 January 2021. This funding will not be topped up if payments exceed the allocation before 31 January. The Council is not required to return unspent funds.
- 1.7 Approval is being sought to continue both schemes for a period beyond 31 January 2021 should the Government decide to extend them beyond this date and subject to the appropriate funding being available.

### 2. Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme

- 2.1 The discretionary test and trace support payment scheme is aimed at people who require similar financial support to self-isolate but do not meet all of the eligibility criteria
- 2.2 The discretionary scheme will be available to Cheltenham residents who have been instructed by NHS Test and Trace to self-isolate, are employed or self-employed, are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and are **not** in receipt of any of the benefits referred to in the main scheme
- 2.3 In addition, the discretionary scheme is for individuals who are on lower incomes and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating
- 2.4 The Council is able to add its own additional eligibility criteria. This is shown in points 7.28 to 7.34 in appendix 2.
- 2.5 Approval is being sought to make any necessary amendments to the discretionary scheme due to changes made by the Department of Health and Social Care or to ensure the scheme operates successfully.
- 2.6 As funding for the discretionary scheme is limited it will be closed should the funding be allocated in full before the scheme is due to end.

### **3. Administration of the Test and Trace Support Payment Schemes**

- 3.1 Councils have been asked to put procedures in place to receive applications and make payments between 12 October 2020 and 31 January 2021.
- 3.2 The eligibility requirements and details regarding the application process provided to Local Authorities by the Department for Health and Social Care have been incorporated in to both the discretionary and standard schemes in appendix 2 and 3.
- 3.3 The discretionary scheme in appendix 2 includes the additional local eligibility criteria
- 3.4 Individuals are required to make application for payment within 14 days of the last day of their self-isolation period.
- 3.5 Where individuals have been required to self-isolate by law from 28 September they can make a backdated application from 12 October provided it is submitted within 14 days of 12 October 2020
- 3.6 An on-line application form will be available on the Council's website from 12 October and arrangements are in place to receive application by phone from any individuals without digital capability.
- 3.7 Payments are to be made within 3 days of the application being received and procedures are in place to achieve this.
- 3.8 Before making a payment checks need to be made to the NHS Test and Trace Eligibility Checker database. Arrangements are being made for relevant staff in the Revenues and Benefits team to access the Eligibility Checker but it may be necessary to delay making any payments if this has not been confirmed.
- 3.9 The standard scheme will be revised in accordance with any revisions made by the Department of Health and Social Care

### **4. Alternative options considered**

- 4.1 None
- 4.2 The Government has made the funding available and expects councils to implement the schemes and make payments between 12 October and 31 January 2021.

### **5. Consultation and feedback**

- 5.1 None undertaken.

### **6. Performance management – monitoring and review**

- 6.1 The Department for Health and Social Care will require reporting of payments made under both schemes.

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<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer: Jayne Gilpin, Head of Revenues and Benefits</b> <b>Jayne.gilpin@cheltenham.gov.uk</b> <b>01242 264323</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Risk Assessment</li><li>2. Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme</li><li>3. Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme</li></ol>
<b>Background information</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-package-to-support-and-enforce-self-isolation">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-package-to-support-and-enforce-self-isolation</a></li></ol>

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk					
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register	
1	If the test and trace support payment scheme is not implemented support will not be available to individual required to self-isolate	Jayne Gilpin	07/10/2020	3	1	3	Accept	Approve the scheme	13/10/2020	Jayne Gilpin		
2	If demand for the discretionary scheme is high then funding may be allocated before the scheme expiry date of 31 January 2021	Jayne Gilpin	07/10/2020	3	1	3	Close the scheme once funding has been allocated	Approve the scheme	13/10/2020	Jayne Gilpin		
<p><b>Explanatory notes</b></p> <p><b>Impact</b> – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)</p> <p><b>Likelihood</b> – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)</p> <p><b>Control</b> - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close</p>												



Cheltenham Borough Council  
Discretionary Test and Trace Payment  
Scheme

**Version Control**

Version	Version date	Revised by	Description
03102020	September 2020	DA	INITIAL DRAFT
06102020	October 2020	JG/DA	AMENDMENTS
07102020	October 2020	JG/DA	AMENDMENTS

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## Definitions

The following definitions are used within this document:

**‘Additional Eligibility Criteria’**; means the additional criteria decided by the Council that need to be met, in order to receive a payment under the Council’s Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme. These will be in addition to the standard criteria and are allowable under Government guidance;

**‘Applicant’**; means the individual making an application for a payment under this scheme;

**‘Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS)’**; means the web-based system used by Public Health England to contact and trace individuals who are required to self-isolate;

**‘CTAS Account ID’**; means the unique number provided by Public Health England through the Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS);

**‘COVID-19’**; means the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus;

**‘face financial hardship’**; a key criterion of the Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme is that all applicants will, if not for the payment, face financial hardship solely due to their need to self-isolate;

**‘Housing Benefit’**; means the benefit administered by local authorities under either the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 or the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) 2006;

**‘income-related Employment and Support Allowance’**; means the means-tested Employment and Support Allowance administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Welfare Reform Act 2007;

**‘income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance’**; means the means-tested Jobseekers Allowance administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Jobseekers Act 1995;

**Income Support’**; means the means-tested Income Support administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Income Support (General) Regulations 1987;

**‘NHS Test and Trace’**; means the service provided to the National Health Service in England, established in May 2020 to track and help prevent the spread of COVID-19;

**‘Pension Credit’**; means the means-tested Guarantee or Savings Credit administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the State Pension Credit Regulations 2002;

**‘Qualifying benefit’**; means any of the following benefits: Housing Benefit, Income support, income-based jobseeker’s Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit;

**‘Self-isolation, Self-isolate’**; means the legal requirement for an individual to self-isolate when told to by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app and the legal duty to self-isolate under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 which came into force on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020;

**'Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme' ('Standard Scheme');** means the Standard Scheme introduced by Government on 28<sup>th</sup> September and administered by Local Authorities;

**'Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme' ('Discretionary Scheme');** means the Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme which has been agreed by the Council and which *may* be available for individuals who are unable to access the 'Standard Scheme'.

**'Universal Credit'** means the means-tested Universal Credit administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Universal Credit Regulations 2013;

**'Working Tax Credit';** means the means-tested benefit administered by Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs under the Working Tax Credit (Entitlement and Maximum Rate) Regulations 2002.

## 1. Background to Self-Isolation and the Test and Trace Payments

- 1.1 From 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, Government has changed the legislation so that certain people will have to self-isolate due to the current COVID-19 crisis.
- 1.2 A package of legislative measures has been introduced to ensure that those who are required to self-isolate, do so and that those on a low income receive a payment to assist their finances and to encourage compliance with the legislation.
- 1.3 The Council, together with Government, recognises that self-isolation is one of the most powerful tools for controlling the transmission of the Covid-19 virus. The Government has set down the requirements for two payment schemes to be set up by the Council as follows:
  - (a) The **Test and Trace Support Payments Scheme (the Standard Scheme)** for those eligible applicants who are in receipt of Housing Benefit, Income support, income-based jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit (the qualifying benefits); and
  - (b) The **Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme (the Discretionary Scheme)** for those applicants who are **not** in receipt of any of the qualifying benefits but who are on a low income and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating.
- 1.4 This document details who will be eligible for a payment under the **Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme**.
- 1.5 Any applicant who is in receipt of a qualifying benefit, should apply for a payment under the standard scheme details which are available at [www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support)

## 2. An overview of the Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme (the Discretionary Scheme).

- 2.1 From 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, individuals will be entitled to a payment of £500 from the Council's Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme if they meet the eligibility criteria listed below:
  - (a) Make an application to the Council within 14 days of the last day of self-isolation in the prescribed form and provide all the evidence and verification required :
  - (b) Are a resident within the Council's area;
  - (c) 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;

- (d) Are employed or self-employed;
- (e) Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result;
- (f) Are **NOT** currently receiving any of the following benefits:
  - Universal Credit;
  - Working Tax Credit;
  - income-based Employment and Support Allowance;
  - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
  - Income Support;
  - Housing Benefit; or
  - Pension Credit; **and**
- (g) Meet the Council's addition criteria for a discretionary payment.

- 2.2 This particular scheme is designed for those individuals (applicants) who:
  - meet the standard conditions 2.1 (a) to (g) above;
  - are **not** receiving a benefit listed in 2.1(f);
  - comply with the self-isolation requirements laid down by Government; and
  - will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while self-isolating
- 2.3 Where individuals meet all the requirements but **are in receipt of a benefit stated in 2.1 (f)**, no payment can be made under the Discretionary Scheme; however, they may be able to apply for payment under the Standard Scheme which is available on the Council's website  
[www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support)
- 2.4 Individuals will **NOT** be entitled to apply for both a payment under the Standard Scheme and under the Council's Discretionary Scheme.

### 3. Commencement of the scheme and scheme closure

#### Commencement

- 3.1 This scheme is available to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for a discretionary payment and who are told to self-isolate **on or after 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020**.
- 3.2 Individuals who are required to self-isolate **before 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020** will not be eligible for a payment.



## Scheme closure

- 3.3 At the present time, Government has stated that this Discretionary Scheme (and the Standard Scheme) will be available until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

## 4. Applying for a Discretionary Test and Trace Payment (the Discretionary Scheme).

- 4.1 Individuals who are resident within the Council's area *may* make an application for a Discretionary Test and Trace Payment under this scheme. In all cases, the 'applicant' will be required to answer **all** of the questions asked and provide the information required by the Council in the specified timescale.
- 4.2 In order to receive a payment, all applicants must meet the full eligibility criteria, details of which are shown within Section 6 of this scheme. The applicant will be required to self-verify certain criteria and also confirm that they will comply with the self-isolation requirements set by Government.
- 4.3 Where the applicant fails to meet the eligibility criteria, they will not receive a payment and will be informed of this by the Council, either at the point of application or as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.4 Where the applicant is successful, the Council will notify them accordingly and make payment in line with the timings and methods shown in Section 8.
- 4.5 Applications can **only** be accepted from individuals who are resident in the Council's area.
- 4.6 Applications will be accepted from a third party in respect of any individual who meets all the eligibility criteria for a payment. However, the following should be noted:
- The person making the application will need to provide evidence of their identity and also the reason why they are applying on behalf of another person; and
  - That any payment **must** only be made by the Council to the person who is self-isolating. No payment will be made to a third party under any circumstance.
- 4.7 All applications shall be made online using the Council's dedicated webpage [www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support) There are no paper or other types of application processes; however, should individuals experience difficulties in making any application, they should contact the Council on 01242 264219.

## 5. Time limits for making an application for a payment

- 5.1 No application for a discretionary payment can be made before the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 or for any individual who has been required to self-isolate before 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

5.2 Eligible individuals can apply for a Discretionary Test and Trace Payment at any time up to 14 days after their period of self-isolation ended. The Council will **not** accept any applications after this point.

5.3 Where an individual has been required to self-isolate on or after 28<sup>th</sup> September but before the Council's scheme opened on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020, an application for a backdated discretionary payment must be made by 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (14 days after commencement of scheme).

## **6. Multiple claims within the household and from the same applicant**

6.1 Individuals in the same household can each make an application to receive a Test and Trace Discretionary Payment, if they each meet all the eligibility criteria in full.

6.2 An individual may make an application more than once but only:

- If the individual is told to self-isolate multiple times; **and**
- they meet the eligibility criteria for each individual application; **and**
- the periods of self-isolation do not overlap.

6.3 The Council is mindful that this can be confusing for applicants and it will be essential, where multiple applications are made by an individual, to ensure correct eligibility. Therefore, a new application will need to be made for each distinct period of self-isolation.

## **7. The eligibility criteria and evidence required for a Discretionary Test and Trace Payment.**

7.1 For payment to be made under this Discretionary Scheme, all of the criteria **must** be met. As with the application form itself, all evidence will need to be provided electronically. The Council provides facilities for all applicants to upload documents, evidence and photographs.

7.2 Where documentation is only held in 'hard copy' or paper form, the Council will accept digital images or photographs provided they show all the relevant information.

7.3 The Council will keep all information supplied by applicants, secure and in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

**An individual must make a valid application to the Council in the prescribed form and provide all the evidence and verification required**

- 7.4 As mentioned in Section 4, a valid application must be made via the Council's website [www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support). All applicants will be required to provide details sufficient to identify themselves, their address and to allow the Council to contact them including:
- Full name;
  - Address;
  - National Insurance Number;
  - Telephone number; and
  - Email address.
- 7.5 In addition to the above, all applicants will be required to submit a copy of their current bank statement(s) in order to:
- Verify that their income has reduced due to having to self-isolate (see later); and
  - Provide details of the bank account number and sort code of the account into which a payment would be made.

### **That they are a resident within the Cheltenham Borough Council's area**

- 7.6 The applicant will be required to verify that they have their sole or main residence in the Council's area. The Council will check other records held (and make other enquiries where appropriate) to determine this.
- 7.7 Where necessary, the Council will ask the applicant to provide additional evidence of residence.

### **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**

- 7.8 A key requirement of the scheme is that the applicant has been instructed by the NHS Test and Trace to stay at home and self-isolate either because:
- they have tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus); or
  - have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.
- 7.9 All applicants will be required to provide the 8-digit unique ID number which has been provided to them by NHS Test and Trace.
- 7.10 For information, the NHS Test and Trace service uses the Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS) to record information about people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their contacts. The CTAS Account ID is an 8-character identifier unique to each case (e.g. 3b1a301c). Most individuals who test positive for COVID-19 or are a contact of someone who has had a positive test, will receive a digital invitation from the CTAS system to undertake the contact tracing journey.

- 7.11 All cases and contacts who have completed the contact tracing journey (including those who were ineligible for the digital invitation such as children or individuals with a landline number only) will receive a citizen advice message upon completion of the NHS Test and Trace questionnaire. The citizen message (sent either via a text message/email or postal service for people with no access to mobile phone or email) contains the 8-character Account ID.
- 7.12 The Council will check the NHS Test and Trace Eligibility Tracker to confirm that the applicant has a valid Account ID produced by the Contact Tracing and Advice Service. Only this number will allow an application to be processed.
- 7.13 The Council will not make payment to anyone who does not have a valid notification (Account ID) from NHS Test and Trace. It should be noted that there is a legal duty to self-isolate which only applies to people who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
- 7.14 The Council will not accept a notification from the NHS Isolation Note service. Where the applicant has provided this only, they will be given an opportunity to provide a valid NHS Test and Trace notification if they have one.
- 7.15 This scheme does not cover people who are self-isolating after returning to the UK from abroad, unless they have tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus) or have been instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

### **All applicants must be currently employed or self-employed**

- 7.16 Only those applicants who are currently employed or currently self-employed will be entitled to claim a Test and Trace Support Payment. For the sake of clarity, this scheme requires all applicants to provide sufficient evidence of their current employment or self-employment status. In the case of employed applicants, full details of their employer must be given on the application form including contact numbers.
- 7.17 The Council will also require applicants to provide proof such as listed below:

#### **Employed**

- Current wages or salary slips;
- Employment contract; or
- Letter from the employer confirming current employment.

#### **Self Employed**

- Self-assessment form;
- Details of HMRC registration as self-employed;
- Current accounts; or

- Current accounts and trading statements

7.18 The above list is not exhaustive.

7.19 As this is an essential requirement in order for a Test and Trace Discretionary Payment to be made, the applicant must satisfy the Council that they meet this criterion.

**Are NOT currently receiving any of the following benefits.**

7.20 To receive a discretionary payment the applicant **must not be in receipt** of one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit;
- Working Tax Credit;
- income-based Employment and Support Allowance;
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income Support;
- Housing Benefit; or
- Pension Credit.

7.21 Where applicants are in receipt of any of the above benefits, then payments can **ONLY** be made through the Standard Scheme. The Council has designed the application process so that the same form can be used to claim either payment (Standard Scheme or Discretionary Scheme) and applicants who fail to qualify for a Standard Scheme payment because they are in receipt of one of those benefits, will automatically be directed to the Discretionary Scheme.

7.22 Where an applicant has yet to apply for one of the benefits listed; is awaiting a decision on a benefit; is currently appealing a negative decision; or is unable to apply for a qualifying benefit, they *may* make an application under this Discretionary Scheme.

**Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating**

7.23 All applicants will have to certify on the application form that they are:

- Unable to work from home;
- Will lose income as a result; **and**
- Will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating

7.24 The Council will need to be satisfied that any applicants meet these conditions in full.

7.25 The Council will require applicants to give details about the nature of their work and whether they can undertake this work from home.

- 7.26 Only those applicants that cannot work from home whilst self-isolating will meet the criteria and therefore, each applicant will not only be required to verify the fact, but also provide details of the reasons why this is the case, together with details of the type of work that they would normally undertake.
- 7.27 The Council will also require all applicants making an application for a discretionary payment to provide evidence of financial hardship. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that the financial hardship is **solely** due to having to self-isolate.

**Meet the Council's additional criteria for discretionary payments**

- 7.28 Given that the funding for the Discretionary Scheme is limited (see Section 14), Government has stated that it will be up to each Council to determine additional criteria that have to be met if a payment is to be made. The additional criteria are shown below:
- (a) The applicant has weekly gross income of less than £415 (this is before tax, National Insurance, Pension or any other deductions;
  - (b) The applicant has capital of less than £3,000 (this shall be calculated in the same way as welfare benefits); and
  - (c) The applicant is suffering financial hardship which means they are unable to pay essential household bills such as rent, mortgage, heating and food. It should be noted that when considering financial hardship, the circumstances of a partner living in the same household will be taken into account.
- 7.29 An application may be considered in cases where income and/or capital exceeds the limits set above and financial hardship is due to exceptional circumstances.
- 7.30 People who have no recourse to public funds will be eligible for this scheme subject to all other eligibility (listed above) being met.
- 7.31 The applicant must provide any additional information requested.
- 7.32 University students and those in higher education are excluded from this scheme.
- 7.33 Payment will only be made under this scheme whilst the Council has funding available.
- 7.34 The Council reserves the right to change the eligibility criteria during the life of the scheme.
- 8. How much discretionary payment will be paid, methods of payment and timings.**

- 8.1 Where an applicant meets all of the eligibility criteria for a discretionary payment, a single payment of £500 shall be paid for each period of self-isolation. Payments will be made direct to the applicant's bank account within 3 working days, starting with the date of application.
- 8.2 Where further information or evidence is required from the applicant, the Council will look to make payment within 3 working days starting with the date when all of the required information is received.
- 8.3 Full details of the applicant's bank account must be supplied on the application form and this will be cross checked with the copies of the bank statements provided as part of the verification process.
- 8.4 As required by Government, payments can only be made to the applicant's bank account. No payments can be made to third parties whatsoever.
- 8.5 The Council is aware that in some cases, applicants may be overdrawn and may not be able to gain access to the payment. In these cases, the applicant may apply for protection. This protection is called a 'first right of appropriation of funds order'. More details of this can be obtained from the Councils website [www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support) or from Citizens Advice.

## **9. Notification of Decisions**

- 9.1 Applications for discretionary payments will be considered by officers of the Council and all decisions made by the Council shall be notified to the applicant either in writing or by email.

## **10. Implications for other benefits and reductions**

- 10.1 The Council has been advised by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that all Test and Trace Support Payments (of any type) will be disregarded for the purposes of all means-tested benefits.
- 10.2 The Council has decided that any payment made under this scheme shall not affect entitlement to Council Tax Reduction.

## **11. Review of Decisions**

- 11.1 Whilst there is no statutory appeal process, the Council will operate an internal review process and will accept an applicant's request for an appeal of its decision by a senior officer.
- 11.2 All such requests must be made in writing to the Council, within 3 days of the Council's decision, and should state the reasons why the applicant is aggrieved with the decision of the Council. New information may be submitted at this stage to

support the applicant's appeal. The application will be reconsidered as soon as practicable, and the applicant informed in writing or by email of the decision.



## 12. Complaints

- 12.1 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Councils website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

## 13. The Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme and its relationship with the Standard Scheme

### Standard Scheme

- 13.1 This 'Standard Scheme' has been determined by criteria set down by Government and is primarily aimed at all applicants who are working or self-employed; are unable to work from home and will therefore have a reduction in income and are in receipt of certain qualifying benefits (Universal Credit; Working Tax Credit; Income-based Employment and Support Allowance; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Support; Housing Benefit; or Pension Credit).
- 13.2 The receipt of one of those benefits is essential in order for a payment to be made.
- 13.3 Details of the Standard Scheme can be found at;  
[www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support)

### Discretionary Scheme

- 13.4 The Council's Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme is for any individual who meets all the required criteria (including the Council's additional criteria) **except** that they are not currently in receipt of a qualifying benefit and they would face financial hardship due to self-isolation. The reason for this could be, for example, that a claim for a benefit has not yet been made or that the individual, whilst normally resident in the UK, is unable to gain access to public funds.

### Claiming from the schemes

- 13.5 Individuals who, at the time of the application, are entitled to a payment from the Standard Scheme are unable to make a claim from the Council's Discretionary Scheme.
- 13.6 However, an applicant who is refused a 'Standard Scheme' payment on the basis that they meet all the criteria **except** that they are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit, will be directed to make an application for a discretionary payment. It should be noted that in all cases, where an individual applies for a discretionary payment, they will have to satisfy not only the basic criteria laid down by Government but also the additional criteria set by the Council.

## **14. Funding of the Discretionary Scheme**

- 14.1 The Council will receive a fixed amount of funding from Government which will be for the four months that the Discretionary Scheme is intended to last. Government has confirmed that **no** additional monies will be given to the Council.
- 14.2 In view of this, and to ensure that discretionary payments are available throughout the period to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, the Council reserves the right to change the Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme at any time to ensure funds go to those who face the most financial hardship.

## **15. Taxation and provision of information to HMRC**

- 15.1 The Council has been informed by Government that all payments under this scheme are taxable. However, the payments will not be subject to National Insurance contributions.
- 15.2 The Council does not accept any responsibility in relation to an applicant's tax liabilities and all applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position.
- 15.3 All applicants should note that the Council is required to inform Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) of all payments made to individuals.

## **16. Managing the risk of fraud**

- 16.1 Neither the Council, nor Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the scheme and fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain payments will face prosecution and any payment issued will be recovered from them and this may also include other recovery costs.
- 16.2 Applicants should note that, where a Discretionary Test and Trace Payment is paid by the Council, details of each individual applicant will be passed to Government. Applicants should also note that the Council utilises a number of databases and Government systems to verify information in connection with any application submitted.

## **17. Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid**

- 17.1 If it is established that any Test and Trace Discretionary Support Payment has been made incorrectly due to misrepresentation or incorrect information provided to the Council by an applicant or their representative(s), the Council will look to recover the amount in full.

## **18. The Council's duties in relation to self-isolation**

- 18.1 The duty to self-isolate is an important one. Ensuring infected individuals and their close contacts isolate is one of our most powerful tools for controlling transmission.
- 18.2 We know that someone with the virus can remain infectious to other people for up to 10 days after developing symptoms. It can take up to 14 days for individuals to develop coronavirus symptoms after they catch the virus, and in this time, they can unknowingly pass it on to others, even if they don't have symptoms.
- 18.3 Self-isolating helps prevent family, friends and the community from contracting coronavirus, as well as helping to protect the health and care system.
- 18.4 The changes announced by Government on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and brought into force on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (as well as providing for the Test and Trace Support Payments Schemes):
- introduce a new legal duty on individuals to self-isolate if someone tests positive or is identified as a contact by NHS Test and Trace;
  - introduce penalties for those breaking the rules, including fines of at least £1,000 and up to a maximum of £10,000 for repeated or very serious offences; and
  - place a new legal obligation on employers that they must not knowingly enable or encourage their employees to break the law on self-isolation.
- 18.5 As part of this, the Council has a duty If it becomes aware, either through post-payment verification checks or through other means, that someone has not self-isolated, to refer the case to the police.
- 18.6 The Council has been informed by Government that, in order to ensure compliance with the new legislation NHS Test and Trace call handlers will be increasing contact with those self-isolating. Police resources will be used to check compliance in highest incidence areas and in high-risk groups, based on local intelligence including acting on instances where third parties have identified others who have tested positive, but are not self-isolating.
- 18.7 The Council will continue to focus on the principle of encouraging, educating and supporting self-compliance.

## **19. Delegated Powers**

- 19.1 The Council has implemented this Discretionary Scheme in line with Government requirements and guidance.
- 19.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme and the Section 151 Officer is authorised to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it continues to meet the criteria set by the Council and, in line with Central Government guidance.

## **20. Data Protection and use of data**

- 20.1 All information and data provided by applicants shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme**

Version Control

Version	Version date	Revised by	Description
031020	September 2020	DA	INITIAL DRAFT
061020	October 2020	JG/DA	AMENDED
071020	October 2020	JG/DA	AMENDED

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## Definitions

The following definitions are used within this document:

**‘Applicant’**; means the individual making an application for a payment under this scheme;

**‘Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS)’**; means the web-based system used by Public Health England to contact and trace individuals who are required to self-isolate;

**‘CTAS Account ID’**; means the unique number provided by Public Health England through the Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS);

**‘COVID-19’**; means the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus;

**‘Housing Benefit’**; means the benefit administered by local authorities under either the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 or the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) 2006;

**‘income-related Employment and Support Allowance’**; means the means-tested Employment and Support Allowance administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Welfare Reform Act 2007;

**‘income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance’**; means the means-tested Jobseekers Allowance administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Jobseekers Act 1995;

**Income Support’**; means the means-tested Income Support administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Income Support (General) Regulations 1987;

**‘NHS Test and Trace’**; means the service provided to the National Health Service in England, established in May 2020 to track and help prevent the spread of COVID-19;

**‘Pension Credit’**; means the means-tested Guarantee or Savings Credit administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the State Pension Credit Regulations 2002;

**‘Qualifying benefit’**; means any of the following benefits: Housing Benefit, Income support, income-based jobseeker’s Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit;

**‘Self-isolation, Self-isolate’**; means the legal requirement for an individual to self-isolate when told to by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app and the legal duty to self-isolate under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 which came into force on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020;

**‘Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme’ (‘Standard Scheme’)**; means the Standard Scheme introduced by Government on 28<sup>th</sup> September and administered by Local Authorities;

**‘Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme’ (‘Discretionary Scheme’)**; means the Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme which has been agreed by the Council and which *may* be available for individuals who are unable to access the ‘Standard Scheme’.

**‘Universal Credit’** means the means-tested Universal Credit administered by the Department for Work and Pensions under the Universal Credit Regulations 2013;

**'Working Tax Credit'**; means the means-tested benefit administered by Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs under the Working Tax Credit (Entitlement and Maximum Rate) Regulations 2002.

## 1. Background to Self-Isolation and Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme

- 1.1 From 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, Government has changed the legislation so that certain people will have to self-isolate due to the current COVID-19 crisis.
- 1.2 A package of legislative measures has been introduced both to ensure that those who are required to self-isolate, do so and, that those on a low income, receive a payment to assist their finances and to encourage compliance with the legislation.
- 1.3 The Council, together with Government, recognises that self-isolation is one of the most powerful tools for controlling the transmission of the Covid-19 virus and this scheme document details who will be eligible and how the Test and Trace Support Payment will be made. It also outlines the approach the Council will take in determining whether a payment will be made or not.
- 1.4 This document, which covers the **Standard Scheme**, should be read alongside the Council's Discretionary Test and Trace Support scheme which *may* be available to individuals who do not qualify for a payment under this scheme.

## 2. An overview of the Test and Trace Payment scheme (the standard scheme).

- 2.1 From 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020, individuals will be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 from the Council if they meet the eligibility criteria listed below:
  - (a) Make an application to the Council in the prescribed form and provide all the evidence and verification required;
  - (b) Are a resident within the Council's area;
  - (c) 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;
  - (d) Are employed or self-employed;
  - (e) Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and
  - (f) Are currently receiving any of the following 'qualifying benefits':
    - Universal Credit;
    - Working Tax Credit;
    - income-based Employment and Support Allowance;
    - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
    - Income Support;
    - Housing Benefit; or

- Pension Credit.

- 2.2 This particular scheme is designed for those individuals (applicants) who:
- meet the standard conditions 2.1 (a) to (e) above;
  - are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits listed in 2.1(f); and
  - comply with the self-isolation requirements laid down by Government;
- 2.3 Where individuals meet all the requirements but are **not in receipt of a qualifying benefit (2.1 (f))**, no payment can be made; however, they may be able to apply for a discretionary payment under the Council's Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme which is available on the Council's website:  
[www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support)
- 2.4 Individuals will **not** be entitled to apply for both a payment under the Standard Scheme and under the Council's Discretionary Scheme.

### 3. Commencement of the scheme and scheme closure

#### Commencement

- 3.1 This scheme is available to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria and who are told to self-isolate **on or after** 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- 3.2 Individuals who are required to self-isolate **before** 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 will not be eligible for a payment.

#### Scheme closure

- 3.3 At the present time, Government has stated that this Standard Scheme will be available until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

### 4. Applying for a Test and Trace Support Payment (the Standard Scheme).

- 4.1 Individuals who are resident within the Council's area will be entitled to make an application for a Test and Trace Support Payment under this scheme. In all cases, the 'applicant' will be required to answer **all** of the questions asked and provide the information required by the Council in the specified timescale.
- 4.2 In order to receive a payment, all applicants must meet the full eligibility criteria, details of which are shown within Section 6 of this scheme. The applicant will be required to self-verify certain criteria and also confirm that they will comply with the self-isolation requirements set by Government.

- 4.3 Where the applicant fails to meet the eligibility criteria, they will not receive a payment and will be informed of this by the Council, either at the point of application or as soon as practicable thereafter.
- 4.4 Where the applicant is successful, the Council will notify them accordingly and make payment in line with the timings and methods shown in Section 8.
- 4.5 Applications can **only** be accepted from individuals who are resident in the Council's area.
- 4.6 Applications will be accepted from a third party in respect of any individual who meets the eligibility criteria for a payment. However, the following should be noted:
- The person making the application will need to provide evidence of their identity and also the reason why they are applying on behalf of another person; and
  - That any payment **must** only be made by the Council to the person who is self-isolating. No payment will be made to a third party under any circumstance.
- 4.7 All applications shall be made online using the Council's dedicated webpage [www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support). There are no paper or other types of application processes; however, should individuals experience difficulties in making any application, they should contact the Council on 01242 264219.

### 5. Time limits for making an application for a payment

- 5.1 No application for a payment can be made before the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 or for any individual who has been required to self-isolate before 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- 5.2 Eligible individuals can apply for a Test and Trace Support Payment at any time up to 14 days after their period of self-isolation ended. The Council will **not** accept any applications after this point.
- 5.3 Where an individual has been required to self-isolate on or after 28<sup>th</sup> September but before the Council's scheme opened on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020, an application for a backdated payment must be made by 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (14 days after commencement of scheme).

### 6. Multiple claims within the household and from the same applicant

- 6.1 Individuals in the same household can each make an application to receive a Test and Trace Support Payment, if they each meet the eligibility criteria in full.
- 6.2 An individual may make an application more than once but only:
- If the individual is told to self-isolate multiple times; **and**
  - they meet the eligibility criteria for each individual application; **and**
  - the periods of self-isolation do not overlap.

6.3 The Council is mindful that this can be confusing for applicants and it will be essential, where multiple applications are made by an individual, to ensure correct eligibility. Therefore, a new application will need to be made for each distinct period of self-isolation.

## 7. The eligibility criteria and evidence required for the Test and Trace Support Payment (the Standard Scheme).

7.1 For payment to be made under this scheme, all of the criteria **must** be met. As with the application form itself, all evidence will need to be provided electronically. The Council provides facilities for all applicants to upload documents, evidence and photographs.

7.2 Where documentation is only held in 'hard copy' or paper form, the Council will accept digital images or photographs provided they show all the relevant information.

7.3 The Council will keep all information supplied by applicants, secure and in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

An individual must make a valid application to the Council in the prescribed form and provide the all evidence and verification required

7.4 As mentioned in Section 4, a valid application must be made via the Council's website: [www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support). All applicants will be required to provide details sufficient to identify themselves, their address and to allow the Council to contact them including:

- Full name;
- Address;
- National Insurance Number;
- Telephone number; and
- Email address.

7.5 In addition to the above, all applicants will be required to submit a copy of their current bank statement(s) in order to:

- Verify that their income has reduced due to having to self-isolate (see later); and
- Provide details of the bank account number and sort code of the account into which a payment would be made.

That they are a resident within the Cheltenham Borough Council's area

- 7.6 The applicant will be required to verify that they have their sole or main residence in the Council's area. The Council will check other records held (and make other enquiries where appropriate) to determine this.
- 7.7 Where necessary, the Council will ask the applicant to provide additional evidence of residence.

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

- 7.8 A key requirement of the scheme is that the applicant has been instructed by the NHS Test and Trace to stay at home and self- isolate either because:
- they have tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus); or
  - have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.
- 7.9 All applicants will be required to provide the 8-digit unique ID number which has been provided to them by NHS Test and Trace.
- 7.10 For information, the NHS Test and Trace service uses the Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS) to record information about people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their contacts. The CTAS Account ID is an 8-digit identifier unique to each case (e.g. 3b1a301c). Most individuals who test positive for COVID-19 or are a contact of someone who has had a positive test, will receive a digital invitation from the CTAS system to undertake the contact tracing journey.
- 7.11 All cases and contacts who have completed the contact tracing journey (including those who were ineligible for the digital invitation such as children or individuals with a landline number only) will receive a citizen advice message upon completion of the NHS Test and Trace questionnaire. The citizen message (sent either via a text message/email or postal service for people with no access to mobile phone or email) contains the 8-character Account ID.
- 7.12 The Council will check the NHS Test and Trace Eligibility Tracker to confirm that the applicant has a valid Account ID produced by the Contact Tracing and Advice Service. Only this number will allow an application to be processed.
- 7.13 The Council will not make payment to anyone who does not have a valid notification (Account ID) from NHS Test and Trace. It should be noted that there is a legal duty to self-isolate which only applies to people who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

7.14 The Council will not accept a notification from the NHS Isolation Note service. Where the applicant has provided this only, they will be given an opportunity to provide a valid NHS Test and Trace notification if they have one.

7.15 This scheme does not cover people who are self-isolating after returning to the UK from abroad, unless they have tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus) or have been instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

### All applicants must be currently employed or self-employed

7.16 Only those applicants who are currently employed or currently self-employed will be entitled to claim a Test and Trace Support Payment. For the sake of clarity, this scheme requires all applicants to provide sufficient evidence of their current employment or self-employment status. In the case of employed applicants, full details of their employer must be given on the application form including contact numbers.

7.17 The Council will also require applicants to provide proof such as listed below:

#### Employed

- Current wages or salary slips;
- Employment contract; or
- Letter from the employer confirming current employment.

#### Self Employed

- Self-assessment form;
- Details of HMRC registration as self-employed;
- Current accounts; or
- Current accounts and trading statements

7.18 The above list is not exhaustive.

7.19 As this is an essential requirement in order for a Test and Trace Support Payment to be made, the applicant must satisfy the Council that they meet this criterion.

### Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result

7.20 All applicants will have to certify on the application form that they are:

- Unable to work from home; and
- Will lose income as a result.

7.21 The Council will need to be satisfied that any applicants meet these conditions in full.



Unable to work from home

- 7.22 The Council will require applicants to give details about the nature of their work and whether they can undertake this work from home.
- 7.23 Only those applicants that cannot work from home whilst self-isolating will meet the criteria and therefore, each applicant will not only be required to verify the fact, but also provide details of the reasons why this is the case, together with details of the type of work that they would normally undertake.
- 7.24 This criterion applies whether an applicant is either employed or self-employed and Government has provided a number of examples as follows:
- An applicant with a single job whose employer continued to pay them a full wage while they self-isolated would not meet the criteria;
  - An applicant whose employer paid them a reduced wage while they self-isolated would meet the criteria (as they have lost income); and
  - An applicant 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.

Are currently receiving any of the qualifying benefits.

- 7.25 The final criterion is that the applicant **must be in receipt** of one of the following qualifying benefits:
- Universal Credit;
  - Working Tax Credit;
  - income-based Employment and Support Allowance;
  - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
  - Income Support;
  - Housing Benefit; or
  - Pension Credit.
- 7.26 Applicants must be **actually** in receipt of the listed benefits. Each applicant will be required to verify that they are in receipt of one of the benefits and provide evidence of that to the Council. Evidence will need to be provided electronically but typically could be copies of bank statements showing the payments, confirmation of benefit entitlement or award /payment summaries (as in the case of Universal Credit). The Council will accept 'screenshots' of any online benefit account.
- 7.27 Where an applicant has yet to apply for a qualifying benefit; is awaiting a decision on a benefit; is currently appealing a negative decision; or is unable to apply for a qualifying benefit, they will not be entitled to a payment under the Standard Scheme and will be directed to apply for a payment under the Council's Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme.

- 7.28 The Council will verify the current receipt of a qualifying benefit with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) as appropriate.

## 8. How much grant will be paid, methods of payment and timings.

- 8.1 Where an applicant meets all of the eligibility criteria, a single payment of £500 shall be paid for each period of self-isolation. Payments will be made direct to the applicant's bank account within 3 working days, starting with the date of application.
- 8.2 Where further information or evidence is required from the applicant, the Council will look to make payment within 3 working days starting with the date when all of the required information is received.
- 8.3 Full details of the applicant's bank account must be supplied on the application form and this will be cross checked with the copies of the bank statements provided as part of the verification process.
- 8.4 As required by Government, payments can only be made to the applicant's bank account. No payments can be made to third parties whatsoever.
- 8.5 The Council is aware that in some cases, applicants may be overdrawn and may not be able to gain access to the payment. In these cases, the applicant may apply for protection. This protection is called a 'first right of appropriation of funds order'. More details of this can be obtained from the Councils website [www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support) or from Citizens Advice.

## 9. Notification of Decisions

- 9.1 Applications will be considered by officers of the Council and all decisions made by the Council shall be notified to the applicant either in writing or by email.

## 10. Implications for other benefits and reductions

- 10.1 The Council has been advised by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that the Test and Trace Support Payment will be disregarded for the purposes of all means-tested benefits.
- 10.2 The Council has decided that any payment made under this scheme shall not affect entitlement to Council Tax Reduction.

## 11. Review of Decisions

- 11.1 Whilst there is no statutory appeal process, the Council will operate an internal review process and will accept an applicant's request for an appeal of its decision by a senior officer.
- 11.2 All such requests must be made in writing to the Council, within 3 days of the Council's decision, and should state the reasons why the applicant is aggrieved with the decision of the Council. New information may be submitted at this stage to

support the applicant's appeal. The application will be reconsidered as soon as practicable, and the applicant informed in writing or by email of the decision.

## 12. Complaints

- 12.1 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Councils website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

## 13. The Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme and its relationship with the Standard Scheme

### Standard Scheme

- 13.1 This 'Standard' Scheme has been determined by criteria set down by Government and is primarily aimed at all applicants who are working or self-employed; are unable to work from home and will therefore have a reduction in income and are in receipt of certain qualifying benefits (Universal Credit; Working Tax Credit; Income-based Employment and Support Allowance; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Support; Housing Benefit; or Pension Credit).
- 13.2 The receipt of one of those benefits is essential in order for a payment to be made.

### Discretionary Scheme

- 13.3 The Council's Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme is for any individual who meets all the required criteria **except** that they are not currently in receipt of a qualifying benefit. The reason for this could be, for example, that a claim for a benefit has not yet been made or that the individual, whilst normally resident in the UK, is unable to gain access to public funds.
- 13.4 Details of the Council's Discretionary Test and Trace Payment Scheme can be found at [www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/test-trace-support).

### Claiming from the schemes

- 13.5 Individuals who, at the time of making an application, are entitled to a payment from the Standard Scheme are unable to make a claim from the Council's discretionary scheme.
- 13.6 However, an applicant who is refused a 'Standard Scheme' payment on the basis that they meet all the criteria **except** that they are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit, will be directed to make an application for a discretionary payment.

## **14. Funding of the scheme**

- 14.1 Government has confirmed that it will reimburse the Council for all payments correctly made under this scheme.

## **15. Taxation and provision of information to HMRC**

- 15.1 The Council has been informed by Government that all payments under this scheme are taxable. However, the payments will not be subject to National Insurance contributions.
- 15.2 The Council does not accept any responsibility in relation to an applicant's tax liabilities and all applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position.
- 15.3 All applicants should note that the Council is required to inform Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) of all payments made to individuals.

## **16. Managing the risk of fraud**

- 16.1 Neither the Council, nor Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the scheme and fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain payments will face prosecution and any payment issued will be recovered from them and this may also include other recovery costs.
- 16.2 Applicants should note that, where a Test and Trace Support Payment is paid by the Council, details of each individual applicant will be passed to Government. Applicants should also note that the Council utilises a number of databases and Government systems to verify information in connection with any applications submitted.

## **17. Recovery of amounts incorrectly paid**

- 17.1 If it is established that any Test and Trace Support Payment has been made incorrectly due to incorrect information provided to the Council by an applicant or their representative(s), the Council will look to recover the amount in full.

## **18. The Council's duties in relation to self-isolation**

- 18.1 The duty to self-isolate is an important one. Ensuring infected individuals and their close contacts isolate is one of our most powerful tools for controlling transmission.
- 18.2 We know that someone with the virus can remain infectious to other people for up to 10 days after developing symptoms. It can take up to 14 days for individuals to

develop coronavirus symptoms after they catch the virus, and in this time, they can unknowingly pass it on to others, even if they don't have symptoms.

- 18.3 Self-isolating helps prevent family, friends and the community from contracting coronavirus, as well as helping to protect the health and care system.
- 18.4 The changes announced by Government on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and brought into force on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (as well as providing for the Test and Trace Support payments scheme):
- introduce a new legal duty on individuals to self-isolate if someone tests positive or is identified as a contact by NHS Test and Trace;
  - introduce penalties for those breaking the rules, including fines of at least £1,000 and up to a maximum of £10,000 for repeated or very serious offences; and
  - place a new legal obligation on employers that they must not knowingly enable or encourage their employees to break the law on self-isolation.
- 18.5 As part of this, the Council has a duty If it becomes aware, either through post-payment verification checks or through other means, that someone has not self-isolated, to refer the case to the police.
- 18.6 The Council has been informed by Government that, in order to ensure compliance with the new legislation NHS Test and Trace call handlers will be increasing contact with those self-isolating. Police resources will be used to check compliance in highest incidence areas and in high-risk groups, based on local intelligence including acting on instances where third parties have identified others who have tested positive, but are not self-isolating.
- 18.7 The Council will continue to focus on the principle of encouraging, educating and supporting self-compliance.

## 19. Delegated Powers

- 19.1 The Council has implemented this scheme in line with Government requirements and guidance.
- 19.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme and the Section 151 Officer is authorised to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it continues to meet the criteria set by the Council and, in line with Central Government guidance.

## 20. Data Protection and use of data

- 20.1 All information and data provided by businesses shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.