



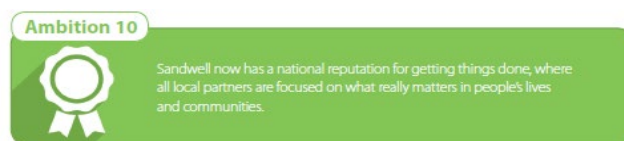
**Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

**Discretionary Test and Trace Support payment  
Scheme Policy**

**2020/21**



## Meeting Ambitions 10



### 1. INTRODUCTION

On the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 the Department of Health and Social Care introduced Test and Trace Support Payments for people who are required to self-isolate because they have either tested positive for COVID-19 or have been identified by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact.

There is also a Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme available for people who have been financially affected because of not being able to work as they have had to self-isolate, but do not meet all the conditions for the main scheme.

To get the main Test & Trace Support Payment, you must:

- have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test & Trace either because you'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 & Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.

The Department of Health and Social Care have advised that the Discretionary Scheme will run until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

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

In some circumstances, people who are required by law to self-isolate may be supported by a Discretionary Test and Trace Support payment of £500, payable from Sandwell Council.

To be considered for this payment a person must:

- have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test & Trace on or after 28th September 2020 either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive
- be employed or self-employed
- be unable to work from home and will lose income as a result
- be on a low income
- be suffering financial hardship.

### 3. AMOUNT PAYABLE

The Department of Health and Social Care have confirmed that a fixed Discretionary payment of £500 can be made if people meet the eligibility conditions.

The payment will be made from the council's financial system and will be made directly to the person's bank account via an electronic transfer (BACS).

There is a cash limited fund for the Discretionary payment and once the fund has been spent no further payments can be made.

### 4. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

An online application form will be made available on the Council's website [www.sandwell.gov.uk](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk)

People will be asked to provide evidence to support their application. The online application will have the facility to enable them to upload any documents required.

The application form will gather all the information required to satisfy the eligibility criteria set by the Department of Health and Social Care and locally to determine if a Discretionary Test and Trace payment can be made.

An application can be made up to 14 days after a person's self-isolation period has ended. Applications made outside of this period will not be considered.

## 5. PUBLICITY

To maximise take-up the council will publicise the scheme using a variety of media, including the council's website and social media. We will work with all interested parties to achieve this.

A copy of this policy statement will be made available for inspection and will be posted on the Sandwell Council website [www.sandwell.gov.uk](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk).

## 6. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

All Test and Trace Discretionary payment applications will be administered by the Revenues and Benefits Service.

There is no right of appeal against a Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment decision.

## 7. OVERPAYMENT AND FRAUD

The council will seek to recover payments found to be overpaid.

The council is committed to identifying and subsequently investigating suspected fraudulent claims made under this scheme. People who falsely declare their circumstances will have committed a criminal offence, which may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated.