

Public Document Pack

Executive Member Decisions

Tuesday, 8th June, 2021

AGENDA

1. **EMD - Test and Trace Support Payment Discretionary Scheme**
EMD - Test and Trace Support Payment Discretionary Scheme (Amended June 2021) 2 - 9
Appendix A - Test and Trace Discretionary Policy (Amended June 2021)
EIA - Test and Trace Support Payment Discretionary Policy (amended June 2021)

Date Published: 8th June 2021
Denise Park, Chief Executive

Executive Member Decision



REPORT OF: Executive Member for Finance and Governance

LEAD OFFICERS: Strategic Director of Resources

DATE: Thursday, 3rd June 2021

PORTFOLIO(S) AFFECTED: Finance and Governance

WARD/S AFFECTED: (All Wards);

SUBJECT:

Test and Trace Support Payment Discretionary Scheme (Amended June 2021)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2020 the government provided funding to all Local Authorities for the establishment of a Test and Trace Self isolation Discretionary Scheme. Due to increased numbers of transmissions in the borough, it is proposed that the scheme criteria is widened to increase the number of residents that could claim the financial support.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member approves the proposed changes to the Test and Trace Self-isolation Discretionary Scheme (Amended).

3. BACKGROUND

Test and Trace Self-isolation payments

Following the introduction of a new legal requirement to self-isolate, the government introduced a new Test and Trace support payment of £500. In addition to the standard scheme, separate funding was made available for the establishment of a local Discretionary scheme.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

Test and Trace policy change

Discretionary schemes have two sets of criteria, the first set by government to ensure some level of consistency across country, the second of which is determined by the Local Authority:

Government set criteria:

- Have received an NHS Test and Trace notification to self-isolate;
- Be Working (employed or self-employed);
- Be unable to work from home and will lose income as a result of having to self-isolate;
- Not currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit;
- Be on low income and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating.

Council set criteria:

It is proposed that the previous requirement to have fixed property costs i.e. rent or a mortgage is dropped, and the maximum income level raised. It is envisaged that these two changes to the scheme will increase the number of residents eligible for the support payment, which in turn will help to reduce the spread of the current variant within the borough.

The new council criteria will be as follows:

- An applicant must have their main residence within the borough, and;
- An applicant must have earned income of less than £25,225 if single, or £50,450 if a couple.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The full Discretionary Policy is detailed in Appendix A. The amended criteria will be introduced with effect from the 7th June 2021.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The discretionary funding is fixed sum. Any payments made above this will need to be funded by the council.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This report and Appendix A provides transparency and shows the criteria that the Council will apply when making their decisions as to whether or not to grant the discretionary payment. The Council must, however, consider applications which may fall outside the policies and should not be fettered in its decision making by the terms of the policy. The council is, however, bound by the guidance set out by the Government as to when discretionary payments can be made.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Any additional work required from the administration of the new relief will be undertaken within existing resources.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

10. CONSULTATIONS

None.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The

recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published.

CONTACT OFFICER:	Andy Ormerod, andy.ormerod@blackburn.gov.uk
DATE:	
BACKGROUND PAPER:	Appendix A Test and Trace Discretionary Policy (amended)



Test and Trace Discretionary Policy 2021 (amended)

Contents

1. Test and Trace Discretionary Scheme	Page 3-4
1.1 Background	Page 3
1.2 Application process	Page 3
1.3 Eligibility criteria	Page 3
1.4 Payments	Page 3
1.5 Backdating of payments	Page 4
1.6 Multiple claims	Page 4
1.7 Appeals	Page 4

1. Test and Trace Discretionary Support Scheme

1.1 Background

A new legal obligation for a person to self-isolate if so instructed by NHS Test and Trace has been introduced to help stop the virus from continuing to spread. To support this initiative, with effect from the 28th September, a Test and Trace Support Payment has been introduced to assist residents who are financially worse off through the requirement to self-isolate.

In addition to the national support payment, the Government has also instructed local authorities to develop and adopt a discretionary scheme to provide financial support to those who fall outside of the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme.

1.2 Application process

It is envisaged that the vast majority of applications will be made digitally through an online form on the Council's website. For those residents who do not have access to digital options, or lack sufficient skills, a telephone line has been made available.

Claimants will be asked for supporting evidences as and when required to support their application.

1.3 Eligibility criteria

To be considered for a support payment an individual must:

- Have received an NHS Test and Trace notification to self-isolate between the 28th September 2020 and the 31st January 2021;
- Be Working (employed or self-employed);
- Be unable to work from home and will lose income as a result of having to self-isolate;
- Not be currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit;
- Be on low income* and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating;

*For the purposes of this discretionary scheme we have determined that low income is £25,225 for single claimants and £50,450 for couples.

- Have their main residence within the borough.

1.4 Payments

Eligible individuals will receive a payment of £500.

The payments will be made within 3 days of approval of the application form.

1.5 Backdating of payments

Eligible individuals can make a claim up to 28 days after their period of self-isolation ended. Applications will not be accepted after this point.

For example, a person who is instructed by NHS Test and Trace on 1st October to stay at home and self-isolate must have applied for the Test and Trace Support Payment by 29th October.

1.6 Multiple claims

Some individuals could be asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace more than once. In such circumstances, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria for each individual claim and their periods of self-isolation do not overlap multiple payments can be made.

For example, if someone claims for a period of self-isolation lasting from 1st October to 14th October and then claims again for a second period of self-isolation beginning on 10th October, they would only be allowed to claim once, because the two periods overlap. However, they would be allowed to claim for a second period of self-isolation that began after the first period had ended on 14th October.

1.7 Appeals

Any appeal against a decision made under the *discretionary* policy must be made in writing and reach the Council within 7 days of an organisation receiving notification of an award decision.

The Council will acknowledge the appeal within 5 working days of receipt.

The Director of Finance will consider the appeal.

The applicant will be informed of the final decision as soon as practicable thereafter.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

This checklist is to be used when you are uncertain if your activity requires an EIA or not.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of the organisation's policies, services and functions on its residents and staff. EIAs should be actively looking for negative or adverse impacts of policies, services and functions on any of the nine protected characteristics.

The checklist below contains a number of questions/prompts to assist officers and service managers to assess whether or not the activity proposed requires an EIA. Supporting literature and useful questions are supplied within the [EIA Guidance](#) to assist managers and team leaders to complete all EIAs.

Service area & dept.	Finance	Date the activity will be implemented	07/06/2021
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Brief description of activity	Test and Trace Support Payment Discretionary Policy (amended 2021)
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Answers favouring doing an EIA	Checklist question	Answers favouring not doing an EIA
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Does this activity involve any of the following: - Commissioning / decommissioning a service - Budget changes - Change to existing Council policy/strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Does the activity impact negatively on any of the protected characteristics as stated within the Equality Act (2010)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	Is there a sufficient information / intelligence with regards to service uptake and customer profiles to understand the activity's implications?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	Does this activity: Contribute towards unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act <i>(i.e. the activity creates or increases disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	Reduce equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the activity fail to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	Foster poor relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the function prevents people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
FOR = 0	TOTAL	AGAINST = 6

Will you now be completing an EIA?

Yes

No

The EIA toolkit can be found [here](#)

Assessment Lead Signature	
E&D Lead Signature	
Date	07/06/2021