

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.

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DATE:	
BACKGROUND PAPER:	Appendix A Test and Trace Discretionary Policy (amended)