

# Public Document Pack



Monday, 29 March 2021

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## DELEGATED DECISIONS

You are summoned a meeting of the Delegated Decisions will be held remotely, via Cisco Webex on **Wednesday, 7 April 2021 at 9.00 am.**



Giles Hughes  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Delegated Decisions

Councillors: Councillor Toby Morris

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Committee Administrator know prior to the start of the meeting.

## AGENDA

1. **Notice of Decisions**  
To receive notice of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 17 February 2021.
  
2. **Test and Trace Self-Isolation Discretionary Support Payment Policy - Report (Pages 3 - 10)**  
Purpose  
To seek approval to make additional amendments to the Test and Trace Self-Isolation Discretionary Support Policy.  
Recommendation  
That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance:  
Approve the inclusion of the Test and Trace Self-Isolation Discretionary Support Payment to parents and guardians of children who has been asked to self-isolate.

(END)

# Agenda Item 2

Council name	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	Delegated Decisions 7 April 2021
Report Number	Agenda Item 2
Subject	TEST AND TRACE SELF-ISOLATION DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT PAYMENT POLICY
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Toby Morris – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Toby.morris@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing – Group Manager for Resident Services Tel: 01993 861221 Email: <a href="mailto:jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk">jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk</a>
Author	Mandy Fathers – Business Manager for Operational Support and Enabling Tel: 01285 623571 Email: <a href="mailto:mandy.fathers@pubicagroup.uk">mandy.fathers@pubicagroup.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To seek approval to make additional amendments to the Test and Trace Self-Isolation Discretionary Support Policy
Annexes	Annex A – Test and Trace Self-Isolation (Discretionary Support Payment Policy)
Recommendation/s	That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance: <i>Approve the inclusion of the Test and Trace Self-Isolation Discretionary Support Payment to parents and guardians of children who has been asked to self-isolate</i>
Corporate priorities	Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The Deputy Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Group Manager for Resident Services

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1.** From 28 September 2020 there was a legal duty on all UK residents who test positive for COVID-19 or identified by NHS Test and Trace as being in close contact with a person who tested positive to COVID -19 to self-isolate.
- 1.2.** To support this, the government introduced a scheme for those having to self-isolate who were financially impacted because of this.
- 1.3.** Any person who is eligible for the scheme will receive a £500 payment.
- 1.4.** There are currently two schemes available:
  - A Mandatory Scheme in which a person must be in receipt of a qualifying benefit to be eligible for payment; and
  - A Discretionary Scheme; in which the District Council can set its own criteria.
- 1.5.** To ensure support for those individuals who were not in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits, were on a low income and would suffer financial hardship (as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating) the Council approved its Discretionary scheme in November 2020 with the following criteria. To qualify you must:
  - 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 else who has tested positive,
  - Be employed or self-employed,
  - Be unable to work from home and will lose income as a result,
  - **Not** 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,
  - Be on a low income and face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while self-isolating,
  - Not be a student enrolled in a full time course, and
  - Not have capital/savings in excess of £6,000.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1.** From 8 March 2021 the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) has extended its eligibility for both the mandatory and discretionary scheme to include parents and guardians whose child has been asked to self-isolate.
- 2.2.** To be eligible the parent or guardian of a child or young person must reside in the same household and need to take time off work to care for them during their self-isolation period; as well as meeting the criteria in paragraph 1.5 (above) which has already been approved by the Council

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1.** For the Discretionary scheme the Government has so far allocated £78,538.40. The Council has awarded £19,500 in discretionary grants since its inception; leaving a surplus of £59,038.40.

**4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1.** There are no legal implications associated with this report. The scheme has been implemented with reference to government guidance.

**5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1.** The Council could experience a high volume of applications which could lead to an over subscription to the allocated fund. To mitigate this risk the funding allocation is monitored on a weekly basis to ensure this does not happen.

**6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1.** There are no unacceptable adverse effects on the protected characteristics covered by the Equalities Act that have been identified.

**7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1.** None

**8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8.1.** None

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# WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## TEST AND TRACE SELF ISOLATION (DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT PAYMENT POLICY)

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy has been amended in line with the recently published guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).
- 1.2 From 28 September 2020 in England, there is a legal duty on all UK residents who test positive for COVID-19 or are identified by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact, to self-isolate. Failure to comply will be an offence carrying a fine of at least £1,000 and up to £10,000 for multiple breaches.
- 1.3 To support this, the government has introduced a scheme for those having to self-isolate who are financially impacted because of this. This scheme will run until 30 April 2021, or longer if directed to do so and sufficient funding is made available by the DHSC.

### 2. Test and Trace Support Payments

- 2.1 From 28 September 2020, individuals are entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500, however, **eligibility is restricted** to people 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 else who has tested positive;
  - Are employed or self-employed;
  - Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and

- Are 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.

### 3. Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payments

3.1 To ensure that those individuals who are not in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits and who are on a low income and may suffer financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating the Government has created a 'discretionary support payment'. Payments will be £500 and the eligibility is as follows:

- 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 else who has tested positive;
- Are employed or self-employed;
- Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result;
- Who **are not** 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; and
- Who are on low incomes and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating.
- Are not a student enrolled in a full time course;
- Do not have capital/savings in excess of £6,000

3.2 The Council will accept an application from an individual who has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace; or an individual who is acting on behalf of the individual who is self-isolating. Payments will only be made into the bank account of the person who is self-isolating.

3.3 Individuals can make a claim up to 42 days after their period of self-isolation has ended. Applications made after this point will not be accepted.

3.4 Awards will only be considered for individuals who meet the eligibility criteria above.

3.5 Individuals can claim a discretionary payment more than once if they are told by NHS Test and Trace that they must self-isolate multiple times, as long as they meet the criteria and the periods of self-isolation do not overlap.

3.6 On completion of the application individuals will need to provide the necessary documentation to support their claim for a discretionary payment.



3.7 The documents required will be:

- The 8–character NHS Test and Trace Account identification
- Evidence to show that they or were are unable to work from home (this could be a letter from their employer, or a wage slip showing a reduction in pay due to loss of earnings as a result of self-isolation)
- If self-employed, evidence to show a significant loss in earnings due to self-isolation.
- Their most recent bank statements and evidence of any savings/capital held
- Their National Insurance Number
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3.8 Applicants will also be required to complete an income and expenditure form whilst providing additional information in respect of their ongoing liabilities. The Council will ensure that support is provided to help individuals complete their applications if requested.

3.9 From 8 March 2021 the DHSC has extended eligibility for both the mandatory and discretionary scheme to include parents and guardians whose child has been asked to self-isolate on or after 8 March.

3.10 To be eligible for discretionary payment applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- They are the parent or guardian of a child or young person in the same household and need to take time off work to care for them whilst they self-isolate. (this is limited to one parent or guardian per household for the child or young person’s self-isolation period)
- They are employed or self-employed
- They cannot work from home whilst undertaking caring responsibilities and will lose income as a result
- Who are not 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
- Who are on low incomes and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating
- Are not a student enrolled in a full time course;
- Do not have capital/savings in excess of £6,000

#### 4. Decisions

4.1 Each support payment application will be assessed on an individual, case by case basis taking into consideration an individual's income and savings against the household expenditure.

4.2 Decisions on successful and unsuccessful claims are delegated to the Group Manager for Resident Services.

## **5. Appeals**

5.1 The Council will not be required to provide a right of appeal against any decision not to award a discretionary payment. Individuals will not be eligible if they do not meet the criteria.

## **6. Fraud**

6.1 The Council is committed to the prevention and detection of fraud and the protection of public funds. Cases of suspected fraud will be referred to the Counter Fraud Unit (CFU) for investigation which may result in clawback of payments made and/or further action being taken against an individual.