

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: jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk
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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