

DELEGATED/URGENT DECISION RECORD

Name and Title of Officer: James McLaughlin, Director of Corporate and Customer Services		Service: Resources	
Delegated Power Being Exercised: To approve a Local Authority Test and Trace Support Payment scheme for Derbyshire Dales District Council.			
Subject of Decision:	Test and Trace Support Payments	Ref.	RES/2020/05
Decision: (specify precise details):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That it be noted that Derbyshire Dales District Council, with support from Arvato Public Sector Services Limited, will administer the Test and Trace Support Payments Scheme in line with government guidance with the scheme starting from 28 September 2020, and arrangements to administer payments being in place by 12 October 2020. 2. That Derbyshire Dales District Council's Local Authority <u>Discretionary</u> Test and Trace Support Payments scheme, as set out below, is approved and implemented from 28 September; 3. That authority to determine applications for the main scheme and all but exceptional cases under the discretionary scheme be delegated to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits Manager • Benefits Technical Officer • Benefit Team Leader • Benefits Officers 4. That the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance and Resources Committee and Arvato's Head of Operations, is given delegated authority to regularly review the discretionary scheme and amend the scheme criteria where necessary. 		
Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On 20 September 2020, the Government announced the launch of a new scheme which outlines financial support for people who are instructed to isolate by NHS Test and Trace, and as a result have suffered a reduction in income. This scheme is to be known as the Test and Trace Support Payments Scheme and will attract a payment of £500. This scheme will be open for anyone who has been instructed to isolate on or after 28 September 2020 and must be in 		

operation by 12 October 2020. The scheme is currently set to end on 31 January 2021.

Someone told to self-isolate on or after 28 September (but before the scheme is operational in their local authority) will need to be able to make a backdated claim for payment. The scheme will last until 31 January 2021.

2. There will be two parts to the scheme, a main scheme and a discretionary scheme.
3. Under the main scheme A £500 support payment will be made to people who meet the following criteria:
 - I. have been instructed to isolate by NHS Test and Trace, and
 - II. are employed or self-employed, and
 - III. are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result, and
 - IV. are in receipt of any of the following benefits:
 - Universal Credit
 - Working Tax Credit
 - Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
 - Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income Support
 - Housing Benefit
 - Pension Credit.
4. The discretionary scheme is intended to help those who require corresponding financial support to the Test and Trace Support Payment to self-isolate, but do not meet all of the eligibility criteria in the main scheme. Derbyshire Dales District Council has been allocated £13,339.18 from the Government to fund the discretionary scheme and is responsible for administering the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to eligible people located within its boundaries. This grant will fund 26 discretionary payments of £500.
5. This report sets out the criteria under which applicants will qualify to receive a £500 discretionary Test and Trace support payment, and the evidence which will be required to support their application. Details of the scheme are attached at Appendix 1.
6. Derbyshire Dales District Council will provide regular progress reports to Central Government with regards to the development and implementation of its Test and Trace Support Payments scheme and for assurance regarding possible fraudulent applications.
7. Details of the scheme have been posted on the Council's website [here](#). A module is being developed on the

	Council's CRM system, to include an online application process. There will also be a telephone application process for those who are unable to use the online form.		
<p>Consultation Identify nature of any consultation undertaken or required as part of this decision and attach responses.</p>	<p>Derbyshire Dales District Council's scheme has been developed in line with Government guidance and is informed by collaborative dialogue with officer colleagues of other Derbyshire local authorities to achieve a consistency of approach.</p> <p>Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Leadership Team who approved the proposal at a meeting on 06/10/20.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place with the Council's Monitoring Officer who advised that the decision is consistent with the Council's Constitution and the statutory requirement on the Council to deliver this scheme on behalf of central Government.</p> <p>Consultation has been undertaken with the Chair of Governance & Resources Committee, who approved the proposal by telephone 08/10/20 (followed up by email on 09/10/20).</p>		
<p>Budget implications. State value of decision and budget used. Decision to be taken without budgetary provision will need the consent of the Head of Service and Head of Resources</p>	<p>Value: Main scheme: £22,000.00 Discretionary scheme £13,339.18</p> <p>To be funded by government grants</p>		<p>Budget Head: Benefits – Test and Trace Payments</p>
	<p>Within budgetary provision? Yes, when offset by grant</p>	<p>If no. Identify budget head</p>	<p>Approved by: (Initials.) KH Director of Resources</p>
Risk Assessment	See appendix 2		
Equalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced in development of the scheme. The scheme ensures that discretionary payments are awarded based on the scheme's eligibility criteria.		
Data Protection	<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment screening has taken place. A data sharing agreement is in place and there is a privacy notice in place.</p> <p>A data sharing agreement between Public Health England and Derbyshire Dales District Council is required to enable the Council to complete eligibility checks on Test and Trace activity and provide Public Health England with information on the support payments which have been made.</p>		
Reasons for the Decision (specify all reasons for taking the decision including where necessary reference to Council	To support people who are instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, and as a result have suffered a reduction in income, in line with Government guidance.		

policy, Contract Standing Orders, Financial Regulations)	
Alternative Options Considered (if appropriate)	<p>Not to process applications for the payments – this would not help residents that are most in need of the financial support at this time and would be contrary to government advice.</p> <p>More generous criteria for discretionary scheme might result in an over-spend, so not considered.</p> <p>Consideration was given to determine eligibility for the discretionary support payment by assessing income and expenditure. However, taking this approach would have attracted applications from high earners with high outgoings, which does not meet the intent of the original government scheme.</p>
<p>List all background/reports/information considered and attached (Legal, Personnel, Financial Implications etc)</p> <p>Legal, financial and personnel issues are set out above and in the risk assessment.</p> <p>The government has issued guidance and FAQs for local authorities.</p>	
Decision:	Approve the decision set out above.
<p>Signature of Officer and Date: <i>J.Mclaughlin</i> 09 October 2020</p>	

Appendix 1

Derbyshire Dales District Council

Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On 20 September 2020, the government announced the launch of a new support payment, known as the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme and asked local authorities to administer the scheme on their behalf.
- 1.2 The Test and Trace Support Payment has been introduced in response to feedback that some people are struggling to self-isolate as directed due to financial constraints. The scheme is intended to help ensure that people who are on low incomes self-isolate when they test positive for coronavirus or are identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive. The scheme is also intended to encourage more people to get tested when they are displaying symptoms of coronavirus. It is hoped that this will help to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and avoid further societal and economic restrictions, including local lockdowns.
- 1.3 Derbyshire Dales District Council has been allocated £22,000 to fund its main Test and Trace Support payments scheme. This amount will be regularly reconciled by the government and additional funds will be provided where required. Unspent monies will have to be returned.
- 1.4 The Council has also been allocated £13,339.18 to implement a Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment scheme. This is a fixed amount of funding and is not subject to reconciliation.
- 1.5 Derbyshire Dales District Council is responsible for administering the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme and the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment scheme to residents located within its boundaries.
- 1.6 This document sets out the criteria under which residents can apply for the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment scheme and gives details of the evidence which will be required to support an application.

2.0 Eligibility for the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Scheme

- 2.1 Local authorities can introduce additional criteria to determine eligibility for discretionary support payments as long as these operate in addition to, rather than instead of the criteria already set by government.
- 2.2 The government has set the eligibility criteria for a discretionary Test and Trace support payment as:

- Those 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 who has tested positive; and
- Those who are not currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support allowance, income-based Jobseeker's allowance, Income support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit; and
- Those who are on low incomes and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work at home while they are self-isolating;

2.3 The Council has set the following additional criteria, in determining eligibility for the scheme.

- Applicants must be in receipt of Council Tax Support; or
- have been in receipt of Council Tax Support or any of the Test and Trace Support Scheme qualifying benefits within the previous two calendar months of the date of isolation; or
- have made a claim for Council Tax Support or any of the Test and Trace Support Scheme qualifying benefits prior to the date of isolation but are still awaiting the outcome.

3.0 The Council's approach

3.1 The Council will accept applications for the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Scheme from people who meet the eligibility criteria and who have been asked to self-isolate on or after 28 September 2020.

3.2 Those people who were in self-isolation before 28 September 2020 are not eligible to apply for the scheme, even if their isolation continues after 28 September.

3.3 The scheme will run until 31 January 2021.

3.4 People from the same household can make individual applications if they each meet the eligibility criteria.

3.5 Applicants can claim for each period of self-isolation as long as they meet the eligibility criteria for each individual claim and as long as their periods of self-isolation do not overlap.

3.6 Eligible individuals can make a claim up to 14 days after the period of self-isolation has ended.

3.7 Applicants can apply on behalf of someone else; however, the £500 support payment can only be paid to the bank account of the person for whom the application is made.

3.8 The support payment can only be made to those people who have a valid notification from NHS Test and Trace telling them to stay at home and self-isolate. The scheme does not cover people who are self-isolating after returning to the UK from abroad.

3.9 The Council reserves the right to vary the terms of the scheme at any time, and without notice, should it be necessary to do so.

4.0 The application process

4.1 An online application or telephone application must be completed. Applicants must provide:

- a notification from NHS Test and Trace asking them to self-isolate;
- proof of receipt of one of the qualifying benefits; or
- proof that one of the qualifying benefits is being assessed;
- a bank statement in the name of the applicant;
- proof of employment or evidence of self-assessment returns, trading income and proof that their business delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact.

4.2 The online application will allow applicants to upload relevant evidence.

5.0 How payments will be made

5.1 Payments of £500 will be credited directly to the applicant's bank account within 3 days of receipt of an eligible application.

5.2 Applicants who are overdrawn can exercise their 1st right of appropriation on the £500 payment, so that their bank does not use the support payment to pay their overdraft. The Council will provide a template to help applicants where this is required.

5.3 Discretionary Test and Trace Support payments will be subject to income tax but will not be subject to National Insurance Contributions.

6.0 Other information

6.1 The Government and the Council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud and any person caught falsifying records or breaching self-isolation when support payments have been awarded may face prosecution and the support payments issued will be subject to claw back.

Appendix 2 – Test and Trace Support Payments: Risk Assessment

The main risks associated with the proposals are shown in the table below:

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Overall score	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood	Overall score after mitigation
The discretionary scheme is under or oversubscribed	High 5	High 5	High 25 Red	Derbyshire Dales District Council's scheme will be monitored closely. If it becomes likely that the scheme will be oversubscribed an amendment to the eligibility criteria may be requested.	High 5	Low 2	Medium 10 Amber
Administration backlogs will delay discretionary payments made to Dales residents	High 5	High 5	High 25 Red	Adequate resources have been identified to support this process, with the ability to scale the team where necessary.	High 5	Low 2	Medium 10 Amber
Discretionary payments are made to ineligible people	High 5	Medium 3	Medium 15 Amber	The scheme provides clarity on eligibility. The process for a discretionary payment requires verification of the information provided. The application is clear that ineligible payments will be subject to claw back and possible fraud investigation	Medium 3	Low 1	Low 3 Green