

RECORD OF INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE DECISION MADE BY A CABINET MEMBER

Decision Maker	Decision Type	Date
Cllr Arooj Shah Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for COVID 19 response	Principal Decision	16.3.2021

Test and Trace Support Payments

Decision

The Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme was approved as presented in the report which ensures that the policy and approach is consistent with that taken by Local Authorities across Greater Manchester

Exempt/Confidential Report		No
Key Decision		No

Reasons for the decision(s)

Test and Trace Support Payments are lump sum payments of £500 which are available to support those on low incomes if they cannot work during their self-isolation period and will suffer a loss of earned income as a result. The national scheme has been in place since 28 September 2020 and has now been extended to the end of June 2021.

The main scheme covers those who have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app and who have engaged with NHS Test and Trace and have a Test and Trace account ID. Applicants can be either employed or self-employed and must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Support

- Housing Benefit
- Pension Credit

The Government has also allocated discretionary funding to support those who meet all the main scheme criteria set out above but who are not in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits. Recipients must be on low incomes and will suffer financial hardship as a result of self-isolating and payment can be made to those with no recourse to public funds.

At the outset of the scheme, common discretionary scheme eligibility criteria were agreed across Greater Manchester so that the limited cash funding, which the Government advised at the time would not be topped up, was distributed to those in most need. The decision to adopt the GM discretionary scheme was made by delegated decision on 13 October 2020.

However, this has resulted in low numbers of residents becoming eligible for the scheme. The Government has also topped up the discretionary fund twice and intends to allocate £20 million of funding nationally from March until the end of June.

The purpose of this report is to present options for an amendment to the Council's discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme criteria to increase the reach of the fund and support more residents to self-isolate when financial concerns act as a barrier to do so.

Options/Alternatives considered

Option 1 That the revised criteria for the Discretionary Test and Trace Support Scheme is agreed, effective from 1 February 2021.

This option will entail revisiting approximately 96 recent cases turned down under current criteria from 1 February 2021 with a view to making payments retrospectively. This will increase spend, alleviate existing financial hardship and support more residents before the end of the 2020/2021 financial year.

Option 2: That the revised Discretionary Test and Trace Support Payment Policy is not agreed and the existing policy remains in place. This option will not increase the number of Oldham residents supported by the discretionary scheme

That Option 1 was approved.

Conflict of Interest declared No



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Cllr Arooj Shah Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Covid 19 response

In consultation with



Anne Ryans Director of Finance



Paul Entwistle Director of Legal Services

Decision made pursuant to:

- a) Delegation to Cabinet Member under the Council's scheme of delegation. Contract £100,000 - £400,000 and Key decisions.**