

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK**

**RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

This is a record of a decision taken by the officers under delegated powers and where necessary taken in consultation with members and officers.

**Delegated Power****Cabinet: 17 November 2020****Para 13:**

That authority be delegated to the Revenues and Benefits Manager, in consultation with the s151 Officer and Council Leader, to decide the discretionary criteria for government Covid-19 support schemes and discounts where they:

- Are part of a central government Covid-19 support initiative,
- Are funded by central government, and
- Will be administered by the Revenues and Benefits section

**Decision Taken**

Creation of the council's Discretionary Policy for Test and Trace Support Payments effective from 28 September 2020 and subsequent updates effective for 2021.

**Reasons for the Decision**

To agree the amendments to the policy for awarding discretionary payments for people required to self-isolate as they have tested positive for Covid-19, or have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive. The government guidelines set specific criteria that must also be included in the Discretionary Scheme, but allow local councils flexibility to add additional criteria under their Discretionary schemes.

**Options considered**

The policy has been discussed with Members at Cabinet Briefing on 28 October 2020 and the types of groups to be included in the policy have been considered. The policy reflects these discussions. The subsequent updates are made to include further Qualifying Benefits, to allow for payments to be made in exceptional local circumstances and to reflect government updates to the Main Test and Trace Scheme.

**Any declarations of interest and details of any dispensations granted in respect of interests.**

Not applicable

**Recommended by**

Signature



Jo Stanton, Revenues and Benefits Manager

Date 9 April 2021

**Authorisation**

Signature



Michelle Drewery, s151 Officer

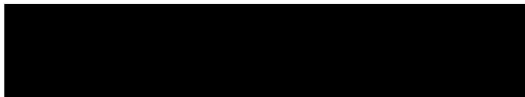
Date 16 April 2021

**Consultation with members/officers**

**If the decision is taken following consultation with the members/officers, please give details:**

Consultation with the Council Leader, Councillor Brian Long

**Signed by Member as consulted:**



Councillor Brian Long

Date 16/4/21.

**Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment**



Name of policy/service/function	Discretionary Policy for Test and Trace Support Payments – Original Policy and Updates				
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function?	New				
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations	The policy specifies the criteria for the Discretionary Payments of the Test and Trace Support Payment				
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups <b>according to their different protected characteristic</b>, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			√	
	Disability			√	
	Gender			√	
	Gender Re-assignment			√	
	Marriage/civil partnership			√	
	Pregnancy & maternity			√	
	Race			√	
	Religion or belief			√	
	Sexual orientation			√	
Other (eg low income)	√				
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Comments</b>			
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	No				
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	No				
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	No				
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	N/A	<p><b>Actions:</b> None required as the policy has an intended positive impact on low income groups</p>			
		<p><b>Actions agreed by EWG member:</b> .....Jo Stanton.....</p>			
<p><b>If 'yes' to questions 2 - 4 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:</b> The policy is designed to support people who test positive for Covid-19, are a close contact of someone who has tested positive or have to care for a child or young person who is a close contact of someone who has tested positive. The criteria are mostly set by central government and the impact is positive as qualifying people</p>					

receive a lump sum payment to encourage them to self-isolate.	
<b>Assessment completed by:</b> <b>Name</b> Joanne Stanton	
<b>Job title</b> Revenues and Benefits Manager	<b>Date</b> 9 April 2021

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**  
**AMENDMENTS TO TEST AND TRACE SELF-ISOLATION PAYMENT**  
**DISCRETIONARY POLICY**

**Changes with effect from 1 January 2021**

- **Additional Qualifying Benefits**

The following amendments are proposed to the council's Test and Trace Self-Isolation Payment Discretionary Scheme:

Expanding the definition of 'Qualifying Benefits' to include people in receipt of, or having applied for:

- Council Tax Support
- Child Tax Credit

Inserting a paragraph that reads:

The council may also decide to make payments under the Discretionary Scheme in exceptional circumstances for specific reasons in order to support the requirement for people to self-isolate and stop the spread of the virus. This may include, but is not limited to, localised outbreaks in specific industries or areas which are a cause for concern.

Any such payments will be agreed in advance by the council's s151 Officer and the Leader of the council.

**Changes with effect from 4 February 2021**

- **Introduction of a minimum income level**

The following criteria are added to the council's Test and Trace Self-Isolation Payment Discretionary Scheme. These criteria have been agreed across all Norfolk authorities, and Norfolk County Council will provide top up funding for the council's discretionary pot to cover the additional payments.

The additional criteria are:

Applicants who meet the mandatory criteria for the Test and Trace Payment as prescribed by government, but are not in receipt of, or applied for, a Qualifying Benefit, may also claim the payment providing:

1. They have savings of less than £3,000, and
2. They have gross household earnings of less than:
  - £37,400 for a family with children,
  - £26,000 for a couple, or
  - £19,200 for a single household

Applicants are required to provide evidence of their household's earnings in the form of pay slips (for employed people) or a self-declaration (for self-employed people)

confirming their gross earnings are less than the limit. They are also required to confirm the household has savings under £3,000.

The gross earnings figure used is the figure recommended by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as an indicator of the minimum income households should receive. Further information is available at <https://www.jrf.org.uk/income-benefits/minimum-income-standards>.

### **Changes with effect from 8 March 2021**

- **Extension to parents and carers of children who have to self-isolate**

From 8 March 2021 the government introduced an extension to the Test and Trace scheme to allow parents and carers of children and certain young people to claim the £500 payment. The following criteria are added to the council's Test and Trace Self-Isolation Payment Discretionary Scheme eligibility criteria to reflect this update to the Main scheme.

In addition to the existing criteria, a person will be eligible to claim the Discretionary Test and Trace payment if:

- 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 while they self-isolate (limited to one parent or guardian per household)
- They are employed or self-employed
- They cannot work from home while undertaking caring responsibilities and will lose income as a result
- They meet all the other criteria for the locally determined discretionary Test and Trace payment, and
- Their child or young person
  - Is aged 15 or under (or 25 or under with an Education, Health and Care Plan) and normally attends an education or childcare setting, and
  - Has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace on or after 8 March 2021 by their education or childcare setting because they have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19.