

Decision Maker: Director of Finance and Corporate Services **Date:** 08 October 2020

Title: Test and Trace Support Payments

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Summary

- In response to the public health emergency, from the 28th September 2020, Government has changed legislation so that certain people will have to self-isolate due to COVID-19.
- A package of legislative measures has been introduced to ensure that those who are required to self-isolate, do so and, that those on a low income, receive a payment to assist their finances.
- Government has directed local authorities to have two support schemes in place by the 12th October 2020 to cover a period from 28th September 2020 to 31st January 2021.
 - 1) A Test and Trace Support Payment (T&TSP) and
 - 2) A Test and Trace Discretionary Payment (T&TDP) Scheme.
- Eligibility for payment under the T&TSP scheme is subject to applicants meeting Government prescribed criteria.
- Eligibility for payment under the T&TDP scheme is subject to applicants meeting Government prescribed criteria along with further local defined criteria prescribed by individual local authorities.
- Government will provide funding to support the implementation, administrative and payment costs of these schemes.
- Full policies including eligibility criteria in line with Government Guidance are set out in Appendix A and B.

Recommendations

- It is requested that the Director of Finance and Corporate Services approves the T&TSP and T&TDP Schemes as set out in this report, and the policies attached in Appendix A and B, under emergency powers.

Financial Implications

- All payments under the schemes will be reimbursed by central Government.
 - Uttlesford's T&TSP grant has been announced as £27,000,

- Uttlesford's T&TDP grant has been announced as £16,298.99
- A new burden grant of £24,017.60 has also been announced to provide support regarding the cost of implementation and administration of both schemes.

Background Papers

- The following papers were referred to in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author;
 - Test and Trace Support Payments - DHSC Allocation Notice
 - Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme: Implementation Guide for Local Authorities in England
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-package-to-support-and-enforce-self-isolation>

Impact

- An Equality and Health Impact Assessment (EqHIA) has been completed in respect of locally defined criteria contained within the T&TDP Policy. The assessment can be found under Appendix C.

Communication/Consultation	N/A
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

- No EqHIA is necessary for the T&TSP Policy as its content has been prescribed by Government.

Situation

- From 28th September 2020, Government has changed legislation so that certain people will have to self-isolate due to the current COVID-19 crisis.
- A package of legislative measures has been introduced both to ensure that those who are required to self-isolate, do so and, that those on a low income,

receive a payment to assist their finances and to encourage compliance with the legislation.

- UDC, together with Government, recognises that self-isolation is one of the most powerful tools for controlling the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
- Under the T&TSP scheme, individuals will be entitled to a payment of £500, payable by UDC, if they meet the eligibility criteria listed below:
 - Make an application to the council in the prescribed form and provide all the evidence and verification required;
 - Are a resident within the Uttlesford area;
 - 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;
 - Are employed or self-employed;
 - Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and
 - Are currently receiving any of the following 'qualifying benefits':
 - Universal Credit;
 - Working Tax Credit;
 - Income-based Employment and Support Allowance;
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
 - Income Support;
 - Housing Benefit, or
 - Pension Credit.
- Where individuals are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit but meet all other requirements, no payment can be made under the T&TSP Scheme. A discretionary payment of £500 may however be considered under UDC's T&TDP Scheme if the applicant meets the following additional qualifying criteria:
 - The applicant has less than £6,000 in capital, and
 - The applicant is in receipt of Uttlesford District Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme, or
 - Immediately prior to the self-isolation period, the applicant was;
 - Working at least 16 hours per week, and

- Earning a maximum gross income of £342.72 per month if under 25 or £409.89 per month if over.
- Individuals will not be entitled to apply for a payment under both the T&TSP and T&TDP Schemes.
- The capital limit used within UDC's additional qualifying criteria has been selected because £6,000 is disregarded as capital within the assessments of qualifying benefits listed in the standard scheme.
- The income figures used within UDC's additional qualifying criteria have been selected to reflect personal allowance figures used within the assessment of Universal Credit.
- The above decisions have not been made by all Essex authorities. Some have chosen to write independent policies or prescribe different conditions to those stated under point 7.29 of Uttlesford's Discretionary Policy.
- Due to the finite amount of just £16,298.99 being received from government to fund awards under the T&TDP scheme, it has been necessary to ensure that the additional qualifying criteria limits applications to those potentially needing greatest assistance with finances.
- The T&TDP Policy has been specifically chosen to include a statement confirming that '*the Council reserves the right to change the T&TDP Scheme at any time to ensure funds go to those who face the most financial hardship.*' If UDC's T&TDP Scheme proves too generous or incapable of meeting essential demand, this statement would ensure that UDC's additional qualifying criteria could be reviewed, and changed if necessary.
- Local Authorities are expected to assess applications and make payment to eligible individuals within 3 days of receipt. A daily payment run through UDC finance department has been created to facilitate this.
- UDC has also purchased software from Northgate Public Services to enable online applications and integrated backoffice assessment.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That both schemes are not administered based on the guidance and eligibility criteria	2 – data is collected and checked. Need to be aware of the urgency of the situation and detailed checks not	2 – incorrect allocations of grants, loss of income from Government reimbursement	Staff are collecting and checking details against data bases and will have the support of new software provided by HMRC to check for fraudulent claims

	done due to current emergency measures		
Demand for the T&TDP Scheme exceeds funding received from Government	<p>2 – UDC will only receive the fixed amount of £16,298.99 to fund the T&TDP scheme over the initial four-month period. Government has confirmed that no additional monies will be given to the council. Based on awards of £500, only 32.5 awards could be made.</p> <p>If UDC's experiences a spike in COVID-19 cases, this funding may not meet the demand.</p>	<p>2 – financial support could not be made to those in need who are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit.</p>	<p>Weekly monitoring on T&TDP expenditure needs to take place.</p> <p>If eligibility needs restricting further, UDC's T&TDP Policy under paragraph 14.2 states that the council reserves the right to change the scheme at any time to ensure funds go to those who face the most financial hardship.</p> <p>Alternatively, UDC could decide to increase the T&TDP fund from its own finances.</p>

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.