

NOTIFICATION OF DECISION FOR URGENT IMPLEMENTATION

(Decision either included or not included on the current Forward Plan but needs to be implemented immediately by virtue of the urgency of the actions that need to be undertaken. This decision will not be subject to call-in.)

ORIGINATOR'S DETAILS

Name & Contact details:

Eugene Nixon, Head of Strategy and Compliance, Exchequer Services

eugene.nixon@southwark.gov.uk

020 7525 3519

DETAILS OF THE REPORT

COVID-19 Test & Trace Self-Isolation Payments:

1. On 20 September 2020, the Government announced that from 28 September 2020 individuals required to self-isolate on or after that date, having been instructed to do so by test and trace teams and meeting other criteria, would be entitled to a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment. The Government also announced that from the same date those found to be flouting self-isolation rules would be subject to a fine of up to £10k.
2. These measures were introduced in response to concerns that as COVID infection rates had begun to rise again, some individuals who were on very low incomes, unable to work from home and who would lose income by not attending their place of work were unwilling to self-isolate even after being told to do so by national or local test and trace teams
3. English local authorities would have responsibility for administering the new Test and Trace Support Payments but Councils received very short notice of the new schemes and guidance on the operation of the new scheme continues to be provided by central Government (Department for Health and Social Care). Nonetheless, the implementation of new payments will form a vital part of effort to ensure the overall effectiveness of test and trace locally and it is important that we make prompt and timely payments to eligible individuals through one of the two schemes to be established.
 - Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme (main scheme); and
 - Test and Trace Support Discretionary Payment Scheme.
4. Local authorities were mandated by Government to have these schemes in place from 12 October 2020 and schemes are expected to run until 31 January 2021. Applications for the new payments are already being made and approved.
5. Deferring this decision could undermine the effectiveness of test and trace, a key bulwark against spread of infection within our communities. Non-payment or delays to payment could leave poor working households facing financial hardship after doing the right thing and self-isolating. Non-payment or unreasonable delays to payment might also lead to a risk of some low-income working households disregarding the instruction to self-isolate and continuing to attend their place of work.
6. Delaying the decision will mean the Council risks reputational damage for failing to properly back national and local test and trace efforts or for failing to provide timely financial support to lowest income residents who are required to self-isolate by test and trace teams.

Date decision to be taken on:

03 November 2020

Date decision to be taken on:

03 November 2020

Urgent implementation notice cleared by:

Chief Officer / Director

Dominic Cain, Director Exchequer Services

Date

30 October 2020

Declaration

I agree/~~disagree~~* with the Chief Officer/Head of Service that the proposed Decision is reasonable and that it can be treated as a matter of urgency.

Reason for refusal

Signed.....*I. Wingfield*..... Dated.....*1.11.20*.....

Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee/~~Mayer/Deputy Mayor~~*

* delete as appropriate

Please note reasons for refusal, additional points or further action required (as appropriate)

Please return completed form to Chidilim Agada, Proper Constitutional Officer, 2nd Floor, Hub 2, 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH – tel: 020 7525 3310.
Email: constitutional.team@southwark.gov.uk