



Doncaster Council

Report

12th October, 2021

To: Councillor Nigel Ball, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Leisure, Culture and Planning

Continued support for self-isolation

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nigel Ball	All	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report details the continued support for those people required to self-isolate as part of the COVID-19 response. The main reported barriers to successful self-isolation include:
 - i. a lack of understanding about self-isolation requirements and the importance of self-isolation
 - ii. concerns about financial consequences and employment risks
 - iii. the practical, social and emotional consequences of self-isolation, including:
 - a. access to food and other essential supplies
 - b. not being able to carry out caring responsibilities and practical tasks such as dog walking
 - c. impact on mental health and wellbeing, including loneliness and boredom
2. This report details the funding provided for the test and trace support payments and practical support funding, covering the practical, social and emotional consequences.

EXEMPT REPORT

3. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. It is recommended that Councillor Nigel Ball:
 - i. Notes the receipt of £1.613m Test & Trace support payment funding and £0.294m Practical Support funding from government.

- ii. Notes the continued use of the Test & Trace support funding in accordance with government guidance.
- iii. Agrees to allocate the £0.294m Practical support funding as detailed in paragraph 17.
- iv. Delegates to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and the Portfolio Holder for Public Health future decision making regarding the grants detailed in this report, including any further allocations notified for subsequent periods not covered by this decision.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. Continuing to provide support for individuals that are required to self-isolate, as part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND

Test & Trace Support Payments

6. From 28 September 2020, individuals have been entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment or discretionary support payment. This is to support people on low incomes who are unable to work from home if they are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and will lose income as a result.
7. The payments are designed to help ensure people who have tested positive for COVID19 and their close contacts self-isolate for the required period to stop the onward spread of the virus. They are also designed to encourage individuals who are eligible for this payment to get tested if they have symptoms. This is important to help stop the transmission of COVID-19 and avoid further economic and societal restrictions.
8. The scheme has continued to be applied in accordance with government guidance and the terms of the funding, including updates where advised; full details of the original scheme were included in the Test & Trace Support Scheme report dated 7th October 2020 ([Issue details - test & trace support payment scheme. - modern council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)). Updates have been applied where notified by government in accordance with the prescribed timescales. For example, the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme was expanded from 8th March to cover parents who are unable to work because they are caring for a child who is self-isolating.

9. The Council has received the following allocations to date:

	Main Scheme £	Discretionary Funding £	Admin Funding £	Total Funding £
Initial allocation (covered in the October report)	162,500	97,650	44,180	304,330
Allocation for January 2021	151,000	40,349	27,789	219,138
Allocation for February 2021	33,000	56,500		89,500
Allocation for March to April 2021	59,500	380,500	38,030	478,030
Allocation May to July 2021	151,000	27,500	39,500	218,000
Allocation August to September 2021	220,000	377,000	10,868	607,868

10. Regular returns are submitted to report actual costs incurred on the main scheme payments, discretionary payments and administrative costs, this provides the Department of Health & Social care with an accurate picture of payments in relation to incidence.
11. Full details on the current government test & trace support scheme are available on the government website using the following link:
[Claiming financial support under the test and trace support payment scheme - gov.uk \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/claiming-financial-support-under-the-test-and-trace-support-payment-scheme)
12. The Test and Trace Support Payment scheme has been extended to 31st March 2022, to enable continued support to be provided for those on low incomes to self-isolate if required to, and to encourage people to come forward and get tested. This extension is part of the Government's COVID-19 response over the autumn and winter 2021/22.
13. The Government have reaffirmed high level scheme parameters for the period October 2021 to March 2022, with specific funding allocations to follow. The Government will continue to:
- cover the cost of all payments made under the main scheme;
 - make a national pot of £20 million a month available for discretionary payments (specific LA allocations to follow); and
 - provide funding for administration costs related to the scheme.

Practical Support

14. The Department of Health and Social Care has also provided Practical Support funding to local authorities, this funding is ring-fenced for public health purposes to tackle COVID-19. The funding is expected to be used to help councils ensure people self-isolating have access to practical, social or emotional support.
15. In addition, the Medicines Delivery Service to help clinically extremely vulnerable people to provide essential deliveries for self-isolators without access to alternatives was launched on 17 March.
16. The Council received £81k allocation per month between March and June

2021, £326k in total, which was detailed in the COVID-19 control monies 2021/22 report dated 7th July 2021 [Agenda Item No \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk).

17. The local authority practical support payments and free medicine delivery service has been extended to at least 30 September 2021. The Council allocation has been increased to £98k per month, which equates to a total allocation of £294k for the period July to September. It is proposed to utilise this funding to:
- i. Award £100k to the Social isolation alliance for the humanitarian fund (open to food banks etc.) to cover the winter period.
 - ii. £100k to Well Doncaster to provide peer support and bumping space support
 - iii. £45k for the back fill of staff for proactive calls to CEV
 - iv. £50k to Voluntary Action Doncaster (VAD) volunteering, prescription, transport.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

18. For the test and trace support payments there is only one option. To award payments in line with the government guidance detailed above. This is the recommended option.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

19. The test and trace scheme will financially assist Doncaster people on the lowest incomes who would lose income if they were requested by the scheme to self-isolate. The proposals for Practical support funding continue to support for those that are self-isolating.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

20.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>This payment scheme will help those in work on the lowest income reducing their financial loss whilst getting themselves well and helping to reduce the spread of the virus.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

21. In relation to the Test & Trace support payments, there is a risk that fraud or error will occur. This risk will be mitigated by the verification and checking process that will occur as part of the process.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Name: SRF Date: 07.09.21]

22. The Council has the power to take this action by virtue of its general powers of competence contained within the Localism Act 2011 and within its general public health powers. The scheme is discretionary and there is no obligation to put it in place or continue the scheme for an extended period of time. It is however a reasonable step to take in the current circumstances. It is advised that a set of eligibility criteria are developed and operated within to ensure fairness.
23. As required by Financial Procedure Rules, it is advised that the external groups receiving the funding detailed within this report enter into formal funding agreements with the Council detailing how monies are to be used and any monitoring requirements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Name: HR & CC Date: 07/09/21

24. As per Financial Procedure Rule E9 this decision is required to accept the funding identified in this report.
25. LA Practical Support funding is ring-fenced for public health purposes to provide practical support for those self isolating. The Council has already received £326k for the period March 2021 to June 2021 which was approved in the key decision COVID-19 Control Monies 2021/22 on the 7th July 2021. This decision is to approve the extension of the funding initially to the end of September 2021 with the delegation to accept further funding should the government choose to extend the scheme beyond September.
26. Planned spend against the Practical Support funding is set out in the body of the report. Initial guidance for the Practical Support funding required monthly returns, this is expected to continue throughout the funding period.
27. Test & Trace Support Payment funding contains a 'Main' element (that is fully funded by the Government) and a 'Discretionary' element (any overspends against the discretionary element may not be fully funded by the Government). As detailed in the body of the report, an existing scheme to make support payments to eligible low income claimants has been in place since September 2020 and is continuing until at least 31st March 2022. With the continuation of the existing scheme it is anticipated that there will be no cost to the Council with the cost of support payments fully funded by government grant – all discretionary grants to date have been within the funding provided.
28. As the scheme comes to a close, any unspent 'Main' element funding and from August 2021 any unspent 'Discretionary' element funding will have to be returned to government.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Name: RH Date: 24/8/21]

29. There are not specific HR implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Name: NR Date: 23/08/21]

30. There are no specific tech impls other than those relating to the continuous use of any existing digital solutions. If changes are required to any existing digital solutions, we would need to be notified immediately.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Name: RS Date: 23/08/21]

31. Practical and financial support are both needed to allow people who test positive with COVID or who are close contacts of people with COVID to self isolate safely.

32. This report and decision will ensure this support continues to be on offer for local residents

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Name: FT Date: 23/08/21]

33. Individuals who do not have on-line access will have the ability to apply over the phone and drop in or post any required evidence.

34. COVID-19 has had a greater impact on more deprived communities and people from ethnic minorities. The allocation of resources in this decision take this into account and go some way to address this.

CONSULTATION

35. Consultation on the allocation of practical support funding has been undertaken with relevant stakeholders.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

36. Previous decisions (links included in the report)

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

N/A

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Faye Tyas, Assistant Director of Finance
Tel: 01302 862606, E-mail: faye.tyas@doncaster.gov.uk

Rupert Suckling
Director of Public Health