

MOTION ON NOTICE

City Council 16 November 2020



COVID-19 Test and Trace Support Payments

Council welcomes the Government's recognition that:

- People requiring to self-isolate because of COVID-19 is a public health issue.
- People on low incomes, zero-hours contracts and the self-employed who suffer a drop in income because of the requirement to self-isolate need financial support.
- People on in-work means-tested benefits should be entitled to mandatory financial support to self-isolate in order that they do not need to go to work to make ends meet.
- There should be no cap on the budget to provide mandatory support for people to self-isolate.
- There should be a discretionary scheme for people on low incomes, zero-hours contracts and the self-employed who suffer a drop in income due to the need to self-isolate to claim financial support.
- Councils are best placed to administer this support.

Council notes that:

- The Government has allocated funding for the Council to award 154 discretionary payments during the life of the scheme (28th September 2020 to 31st January 2021).
- In Plymouth, in common with many other parts of the country where the demographic is such that it is unlikely that low income employees can work from home, demand from eligible applicants for the discretionary scheme outstrips the demand from eligible applicants for the mandatory scheme, contrary to the proportions in which the funding was allocated.

Council is concerned that the Government:

- Does not recognise that a parent in a low income or zero hours job who has to stay at home to care for a self-isolating child could also need financial support to self-isolate.
- Has not extended the national or local self-isolation support schemes until the end of March 2021 in line with the extension to the furlough scheme.
- Has not taken the rise in COVID-19 cases or local demographics into account when establishing a budget for the discretionary financial support fund.
- Has provided a different funding mechanism for the discretionary support scheme, which limits the number of people it can help

Council therefore instructs the:

- Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to review the discretionary element of the COVID-19 Test and Trace Support Payments scheme, and provide additional grant funding as necessary to ensure it continues to support those in need.
- Chief Executive to write to Plymouth's MPs raising these concerns and asking them to campaign for a review of the discretionary element of the COVID-19 Test and Trace Support Payments scheme and additional grant funding as necessary in order to support their constituents on low incomes, zero-hours contracts and who are self-employed that are required to self-isolate.
- Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative development to work with the Director of Public Health to ensure that the Council does all it can to provide support to people on low incomes, zero-hours contracts and who are self-employed that are required to self-isolate.

Proposer: Cllr Chris Penberthy

Signature 

Seconder: Cllr Tudor Evans OBE

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