

# COUNCILLORS' INFORMATION BULLETIN

Friday, 9 October 2020

**Bulletin No: IB/1048a**

## INFORMATION ITEM

Pages

1 **Urgent Action Taken Under Delegated Powers: Extension of Leisure Centre Contract Variation**

On 15 July 2020, the Chief Executive took a decision under Emergency Urgency Powers to 'waive' the payment of the contract fee to the Council and agree to underwrite costs to facilitate the reopening of K2 Crawley, The Bewbush Centre and The Broadfield 3G pitch.

With the current distancing and public health requirements in place, the guidance under Procurement Policy Note 02/20 continues to apply and as such the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Head of Corporate Finance and the Chief Executive, took the decision on 8 October 2020 to extend the contract variation whereby the contract fee would not be paid and the Council would meet the operational cost up to an agreed capped level of £72,000 for October 2020. It is anticipated that approval for an extension of this agreement (covering the period November 2020 to March 2021) will be requested as part of a report to the Full Council on 21 October 2020.

It was considered that this decision was urgent and it was impractical to convene a quorate meeting of the Council to consider this decision, and as such it was taken under Rule C.8 of the Financial and Budget Procedure Rules (Urgent Decisions Outside the Budget). In accordance with Rule C.8, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission agreed that the decision was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred.

2 **Action Taken Under Delegated Authority (Significant Operational Decision): Discretionary Track and Trace Isolation Payments Scheme**

3 - 10

On 8 October 2020, the Chief Executive took a significant operational decision to approve the Crawley Borough Council Discretionary Track and Trace Isolation Payment Scheme. Details of the Scheme are as follows:

As an authority we want to ensure that financial hardship does not prevent people within our community, who may not be in receipt of benefit, from



Switchboard: 01293 438000  
Main fax: 01293 511803  
Minicom: 01293 405202 DX:  
57139 Crawley 1  
[www.crawley.gov.uk](http://www.crawley.gov.uk)

Town Hall  
The Boulevard  
Crawley  
West Sussex  
RH10 1UZ

self-isolating when they have been told to by the track and trace service as a result of testing positive or being a close contact of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus.

We have designed a scheme (attached) that will allow us to make payments (funds permitting) to those who will suffer financial hardship as a result of self-isolating.

Applicants will still have to meet the other conditions of the main scheme including having a track and trace number, being employed, being unable to work from home and losing income as a result of being told to self-isolate.

We will take a number of things in to consideration and will prioritise payments to

- those with little or no savings,
- who work in a sector where they will have a lot of social interaction such as hospitality or food preparation,
- those with children,
- large amount of debt and outgoings such as child maintenance,
- those who may fear for their jobs after returning from a long period of reduced income due to being furloughed and
- those with no recourse to public funds who cannot make an application for any benefit.

Our experienced benefit staff who make discretionary awards on a daily basis will be used to assess the discretionary applications and award where appropriate under the guidelines of the scheme.

# Agenda Item 2

## RECORD OF SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL DECISION

### Record of decision taken

To approve the Discretionary Track and Trace Isolation Payment Scheme.

<b>Name of Officer</b>	Natalie Brahma-Pearl
------------------------	----------------------

<b>Job Title of Officer</b>	Chief Executive
-----------------------------	-----------------

<b>Signature</b>	
------------------	---

<b>Date decision was taken</b>	8 October 2020
--------------------------------	----------------

### Record of the reasons for the decision

As an authority we want to ensure that financial hardship does not prevent people within our community, who may not be in receipt of benefit, from self-isolating when they have been told to by the track and trace service as a result of testing positive or being a close contact of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus.

We have designed a scheme that will allow us to make payments (funds permitting) to those who will suffer financial hardship as a result of self-isolating.

Applicants will still have to meet the other conditions of the main scheme including having a track and trace number, being employed, being unable to work from home and losing income as a result of being told to self-isolate.

We will take a number of things in to consideration and will prioritise payments to

- those with little or no savings,
- who work in a sector where they will have a lot of social interaction such as hospitality or food preparation,
- those with children,
- large amount of debt and outgoings such as child maintenance,
- those who may fear for their jobs after returning from a long period of reduced income due to being furloughed and
- those with no recourse to public funds who cannot make an application for any benefit.

Our experienced benefit staff who make discretionary awards on a daily basis will be used to assess the discretionary applications and award where appropriate under the guidelines of the scheme.

### Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer when making the decision

Refusal of the proposed scheme – rejected – those on a low income would suffer financial hardship due to being told to self-isolate. The Government has provided Crawley Borough Council with £29,450 to finance the scheme.

### Background documents

Discretionary Track and Trace Isolation Payment Scheme Policy

This page is intentionally left blank

## Discretionary Track and Trace Isolation Payment Scheme

Jocelyne Berreen  
Deputy Benefit Manager



Discretionary Track and Trace isolation payment scheme						
Created by	Deputy Benefit Manager	Jocelyne Berreen	Adopted Date		Version	1
Ref			Review Date		Page 1 of 6	

## Contents

Overview	Page 3
Eligibility	Page 3
Circumstances to consider	Page 4
Application process	Page 4
Verification of application	Page 4
Administration	Page 4
Notification of award	Page 5
Payment	Page 5
Accessibility requirements	Page 5
Changes to this policy	Page 5
Disputes	Page 5
Fraud prevention and enforcement	Page 6
Data Sharing and Data Security	Page 6
Record Keeping	Page 6

Discretionary Track and Trace isolation payment scheme						
Created by	Deputy Benefit Manager	Jocelyne Berreen	Adopted Date		Version	1
Ref			Review Date		Page 2 of 6	

## Overview

Due to Covid 19 the Government has provided Crawley Borough Council (CBC) with £29,450 to help local residents who have been asked to self-isolate by the NHS Track and Trace service but who do not meet the qualifying conditions for the main Track and Trace scheme.

The guidance for the discretionary scheme confirms that the payments of £500 can be paid to applicants that are on a low income and would suffer financial hardship due to being told to self isolate and who meet all of the criteria for the main scheme except the benefit criteria.

This scheme is open to applications from those who have been asked to self-isolate between 28 September 2020 and 31 January 2021

## Eligibility

Local authorities can make a £500 discretionary payment to individuals who:

- 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; and
- are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result.

In addition, the discretionary payment is for people:

- who are not currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit; and
- who are on low incomes and will face financial hardship as a result of not being able to work while they are self-isolating.

For both the Test and Trace Support Payment and discretionary payments, eligible individuals will receive a £500 payment

All awards will be at the discretion of CBC.

Discretionary Track and Trace isolation payment scheme						
Created by	Deputy Benefit Manager	Jocelyne Berreen	Adopted Date		Version	1
Ref			Review Date		Page 3 of 6	

## Circumstances where we would consider an Award

When considering a discretionary award the following additional criteria should be taken into account:

- There must be evidence of financial hardship
- How the applicants occupation is likely to affect the transmission of the virus
- The applicant does not have access to any other funds or assets

Specific Circumstances
Normal weekly earnings of less than £400 per week if no children
Normal weekly earnings of less than £600 per week if have children
Capital and Savings of less than £2,000 in total
Consideration of debts and other priority outgoings such as child maintenance
Priority given to those in jobs that have lots of contacts such as hospitality, catering, manufacturing, food prep, cleaners, retail
Those who have recently returned to work after a long period of furlough
Those with no recourse to public funds.

This list is not exhaustive and each application will be considered on its own merits.

## Application Process

Applications will be made online via the Crawley Borough Council website. Those who are digitally excluded will be able to make their applications via the contact centre over the phone.

Applications can only be made by those who have been asked to self-isolate after 28 September 2020.

Applications must be made within 14 days of the self-isolation period ending to be considered.

## Verification of Applications

All applications will be verified by experienced benefit assessors using access to government and local authority systems including, Track and Trace eligibility checker, DWP and HMRC data. A pre-payment fraud check will be carried out.

## Administration

These awards to be administered by Corporate Finance (Revenues & Benefits). Once the additional funds are exhausted no new applications will be considered under this scheme.

Discretionary Track and Trace isolation payment scheme						
Created by	Deputy Benefit Manager	Jocelyne Berreen	Adopted Date		Version	1
Ref			Review Date		Page 4 of 6	



## Notification of Award

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email. If they are unsuccessful the reasons will be given.

## Payment of Award

Payments will be made up front as a single payment to the bank account matching the bank statement provided within 3 working days of all of the information and evidence being provided in order to make a decision. Payments must be made into a bank account in the name of the person who has made the application.

## Accessibility

The Crawley Borough Council website meets WCAG 2.0 accessibility requirements.

## Changes to this Policy

This policy can have minor amendments throughout the year by the Chief Executive of Crawley Borough Council, based on the sums remaining available in the scheme. These changes will be reported to Councillors.

## Disputes regarding Discretionary Track and Trace Isolation payments

As these payments are purely discretionary, there is no statutory right of appeal, however, Crawley Borough Council does recognise that applicants should be entitled to have a decision reviewed objectively if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their application.

Requests for reconsideration can only be made by the original applicant. Requests for reconsideration must be in writing and include reasons as to why the decision should be amended and include any new or additional information relevant to the decision making process.

Reconsiderations will be considered by a different officer than the one who made the initial decision.

Requests for considerations must be made within a calendar month of the original decision being made.

If we have requested further information and evidence to support the reconsideration and this has not been received within the specified time scale, the reconsideration will be refused on the grounds of lack of supporting evidence.

Discretionary Track and Trace isolation payment scheme						
Created by	Deputy Benefit Manager	Jocelyne Berreen	Adopted Date		Version	1
Ref			Review Date		Page 5 of 6	

**Fraud Prevention and Enforcement of Self-Isolation**

Pre-payment fraud checks will be carried out before payment is made by the investigation team.

Those applicants who are suspected of not self-isolating will be referred to the police for enforcement action to be taken.

**Data Sharing & Data Security**

Data shared by the Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS) system to confirm eligibility.

Data shared by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) system, Searchlight, to check that each applicant is receiving one of the qualifying benefits.

Data Shared by HMRC via VEP system to confirm applicant is working.

Data Sharing agreements and memorandum of understandings are in place which refer to local welfare provision such as this award.

Data security arrangements are in place, and applicants’ evidence will be handled in line with the General Data Protection Regulations and local information governance policies and procedures.

**Record keeping**

We will keep records to supply management information

We will keep records to supply details to HMRC about payments made to individuals for tax purposes

Discretionary Track and Trace isolation payment scheme						
Created by	Deputy Benefit Manager	Jocelyne Berreen	Adopted Date		Version	1
Ref			Review Date		Page 6 of 6	