

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Andrew Scott-Clark
Director of Public Health

DECISION NO:

OD/20/0005

For publication Yes

Subject matter: Local Authority Test and Trace Service Support grant and associated outbreak management funding - **Community Testing Programme**

Cabinet Member decision to which this action relates:

Clair Bell – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

Key Decision **20/00095**- <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2416>

Decision:

As Director of Public Health, I agree:

- a) That KCC will accept the Asymptomatic Testing Fund, subject to finalising the details of the relevant terms and conditions;
- b) That KCC will deliver the Community Testing programme, with spend and activity directed in accordance with the governance arrangements set out in Key Decision 20/00095.

In making this decision, I confirm that the Asymptomatic Testing / Community Testing Programme is being progressed via delegated authority granted under Key Decision 20/00095, which made provision for Officer decision-making to manage additional funding and responsibilities in relation to Test and Trace Support and outbreak management.

Reason(s) for decision:**Background:**

A national pandemic has occurred in the form of the coronavirus (COVID-19). In response to the pandemic, local authorities, including both upper and lower tiers, have and will continue to incur expenditure to mitigate and manage local outbreaks of the disease. As such funding has been made available to support upper and lower tier authorities take positive action.

Kent is experiencing a variegated pattern of COVID-19 across its population following the 2nd National Lockdown (November 5th – December 2nd, 2020). This led to the area being placed in Tier 3 leading to the toughest restrictions being put in place on the Kent population. Kent County Council has had the opportunity to secure funding from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) from a national funding package to offer targeted population testing with the aim to bring down infection rates in the county.

Asymptomatic testing has been shown in Liverpool to significantly reduce prevalence of the virus, contributing to the region entering into Tier 2 restrictions following the second national lockdown (down from Tier 3 restrictions before the lockdown).

Overview of the decision:

Funding has been made available to support upper and lower tier authorities take positive action to

mitigate and prevent outbreaks. This funding has come in a series of payments including a Test and Trace Grant and Contain Outbreak Management Fund. KCC took the decision 20/00095 which endorsed arrangements for allocating this funding and subsequent funds.

Further outbreak management funding was expected to support the mitigation against and management of COVID-19 outbreaks. Therefore, the key decision (20/00095) included the delegated authority to the Director of Public Health, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and the Corporate Director of Finance, to accept and deploy further funding if made available by Government, providing the governance arrangements established by this decision may be applied with limited amendment.

KCC submitted a successful bid for funding to deliver the Community Testing Programme. This Officer decision is required to accept the funding and confirm KCC's delivery of the programme. This Officer decision falls under the anticipated delegations detailed in Key Decision '20/00095 – Local Authority Test and Trace Service Support grant and associated outbreak management funding' as detailed above. KCC has requested one amendment to the standard terms to ensure a more realistic and viable timescale for roll out of the programme given its size and scale. (Further details are set out in the Community Testing programme details)

Financial Implications:

Department of Health and Social Care have made available funding of £14 per test undertaken. The total actual funding received will be the lower of i) total costs reasonably and necessarily incurred by the Authority in relation to the set-up and running of the testing stations (excluding testing kits, which are to be provided free of charge, and internal resources, where there is no additional cost to the Authority) and ii) the number of tests delivered over a six week period (at each testing site) times by £14. KCC are proposing to undertake 1 million tests across Kent, which would equate to a maximum possible grant of £14,000,000. The level of funding is based on the number of tests delivered which could mean there is a risk of costs not being fully covered if the actual number of tests is significantly lower than the target.

The money will be spent in line with the funding framework approved under Decision 20/0095 and will be monitored by the Test and Trace Grant Monitoring Group (TTGMG) which will consider all spend against the four identified categories. This funding will mainly contribute towards the following categories of spend in the framework:

- Enhance the national response and enable delivery of national policy priorities in relation to the mitigation against and management of local outbreaks of COVID-19. Kent will be delivering national policy priorities by undertaking the Community Testing programme as stipulated in the COVID-19 Winter Plan. This service should contribute to other outbreak management projects by ensuring that local outbreaks are controlled, and less people are unaware that they unwittingly have COVID-19.
- Enhance local activities including those conducted by district and borough councils in the mitigation against and management of local outbreaks of COVID-19. KCC's approach to the Community Testing programme will be rolled out in phases, targeting local communities with a known higher prevalence of the virus first and then moving to other areas that may require support. This will enable local management of COVID-19 outbreaks down to a Medium super output area level.

Community Testing programme details:

This Community Testing programme will screen a targeted sample of the Kent 'asymptomatic' population for COVID-19.

The programme is aiming to reduce transmission of the virus over December and January and bring positive COVID-19 rates down whilst also reducing hospital admissions. The intention is that this programme (alongside other measures already in place) will help achieve these objectives. The funding will enable KCC to rapidly implement Asymptomatic testing, by recruiting up to 1,800 individuals to help run a minimum of 24 sites across the county.

The programme will invite over 600,000 individuals to take part in targeted testing at one of the 24 sites across the county. Kent will initially open two sites in Thanet and Swale before the 25th December with other sites to follow in the New Year. The aim is to have a further six to eight sites open in early January followed by the remaining 13-15 sites across the county as appropriate. There is potential for additional sites to be open in port areas and lorry parks across East Kent.

The funding will be utilised to set up testing hubs in phases across Kent, based upon the prevalence of COVID-19 in those areas. Areas with a higher number of positive COVID-19 test results per 100,000 people will be prioritised in earlier phases.

Members of the public will be invited to attend a site, local to where they live or work, in order to be tested for COVID-19. These new testing sites will be for people who are showing no symptoms of the virus but could still be infected.

COVID-19 will be detected utilising Lateral Flow Tests that were used in the Liverpool iteration of this programme. If an individual returns a positive Lateral Flow test, then they will be guided to take a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test to confirm the diagnosis.

It is intended that this service will contribute to reducing the positivity rate of COVID-19 tests and will also reduce the burden on NHS services by getting asymptomatic individuals to isolate following a positive test and stymie the spread of the virus. It will support and enhance delivery of the details set out in the key decision 20/00095 'Local Authority Test and Trace Service Support grant and associated outbreak management funding' to mitigate and prevent outbreaks.

Funding levels for this will be estimated based upon the number of tests that the Local Authority is aiming to deliver over a 6-week programme. The 6-week timeframe will vary per site and be based on the commencement date (date of first test) for that site. This approach will ensure testing can be rolled out in a phased way across the county. This 6-week timeframe differs from the standard funding terms which are based on the date of the first test for the entire programme. KCC has therefore requested an amendment to these standard terms.

Kent has the ambition that it will undertake 1 million tests across the country at 24 different testing sites, but actual delivery will be dependent on a number of variables such as uptake by the public.

The funding will be used to pay for infrastructure costs to enable the programme to run smoothly and effectively. The DHSC will be providing testing kits (free of charge) and testing consumables including PPE (for which there will be a charge) as part of the project but other areas of spend include estimated values below:

Set up costs and project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitations • Communication and promotions • Premises costs (e.g. minor repairs to make safe) • Set up costs including ICT, Signage • Project Management • Recruitment and employment checks • Contingency 	£2.5M
Operational costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce costs including staffing, uniforms 	£11.5 M

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premises costs including rental, utilities, maintenance, cleaning, clinical waste and waste disposal • Logistics and storage • Contingency | |
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Monitoring arrangements:

A project group has been established to oversee delivery of the funding which will report any exceptions to the Test and Trace Monitoring Group (TTMG). The TTMG will monitor high level spend with any significant variance being agreed with the DPH after consultation with the Cabinet Member and Corporate Director. Finance.

The funding will be allocated in line with DHSC guidance on Community Testing asymptomatic individuals and will not replicate testing that is already in place. This Community Testing programme will work alongside other KCC led initiatives as part of this Key Decision, such as Test and Trace and Outbreak Management funds, to reduce COVID-19 in the county.

Comments received from any Members or Officers consulted:

Mrs Bell – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

I have been consulted and am happy to endorse this decision as it will support Kent to tackle the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Zena Cooke – Corporate Director for Finance

I have been consulted on and support this decision as taken by the Director of Public Health including the amendment to the standard terms set out by DHSC.

Legal implications:

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 [8], Directors of Public Health (DPH) in upper tier (UTLA) and unitary (ULA) local authorities have a specific duty to protect the population’s health. All spending will be aligned to, and distributed, in accordance with the relevant COVID-19 legislation and guidance.

KCC will adhere to and follow relevant legislation for activities such as employment, procurement and data protection law and health and safety legislation. Assurance around these will be managed through the TTMG and escalated to the DPH.

Policy considerations:

This funding will be used to support KCC and the Director of Public Health’s statutory obligation to protect and improve the health of the local population as set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012, to contribute towards the delivery of the Kent and Medway Local Outbreak Plan (https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/110224/Local-Outbreak-COVID-19-Control-Plan.pdf) and adhere to the DHSC COVID-19 Contain Framework (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/containing-and-managing-local-coronavirus-COVID-19-outbreaks/COVID-19-contain-framework-a-guide-for-local-decision-makers#annex-2>). The

funding will also support work towards the Government's COVID-19 Winter Plan (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/COVID-19-winter-plan>)

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The following options have been considered and discounted:

- To not bid for the funding – There was the option to not bid for the funding, however with infection rates increasing and the funding becoming available to support KCC's statutory requirements it would not have been in the Public interest to fail to bid for this funding. The COVID-19 Winter Plan also encourages Tier 3 Local Authorities should bid for the funding.
- Accept the Funding but delegate responsibility to a third party for delivery – The funding stipulates that Upper Tier authorities must be the ones who bid but funding could have then been disseminated to a third party. Due to the logistics involved in the programme and the pace required to get the programme up and running this decision was not taken.

Any conflict of interest declared by any executive member consulted by the decision maker and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None



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Signed: Andrew Scott-Clark
Director of Public Health

17 December 2020

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Date