



South Somerset District Council's Business Revitalisation Scheme Guidance November 2021

The Business Revitalisation Grant is being made available by South Somerset District Council as part of the support that has been provided to the Council in the form of the Covid-19 Additional Restrictions Grant.

The grant scheme is designed to support viable businesses who have been or remain impacted by Covid 19. Grants of up to £10,000 are available. The fund is available for businesses that support 10 or more employees and have a business rated premises within South Somerset.

Applications are invited from 11th November 2021 at 11.30am. The application window will close at 10am on Wednesday 1st December. Businesses from any sector can apply. Should the scheme be over-subscribed the closure date may be brought forward, so businesses are encouraged to apply early on to ensure the Council is able to consider their application.

The key qualifying criteria is set out below:

To be eligible to apply, applicants must:

- Be the current ratepayer and be in occupation of business rated premises in the South Somerset area throughout the last 12 months (November 2020)
- Have a business rateable value of £15,001 or over, within the South Somerset area and occupy the premises concerned
- Employ at least 10 people (including part time)
- Demonstrate proven financial difficulty – at least 25% decrease in turnover as a result of the Covid crisis
- Be viable and not failing, but require some temporary additional support to stabilise its operations due to the impact that Covid19 has had on its market, customer base or supply chain.

Further clarification points:

- Access to the scheme is for businesses with business rates accounts only
- National chains are not eligible
- The majority of business premises and employees must be located in Somerset. The main business premises must be located within South Somerset
- Applicants which have previously received one or more Covid business support grant payment will not be excluded from the scheme and may apply
- A maximum of one Business Revitalisation Grant can be claimed per business (do not submit multiple applications if the business has more than one business premises).
- Awards must be permissible in terms of business [subsidy rules and guidance](#) (formerly state aid)
- The business must have the intention to use the money to continue its business operations
- Where an award is made, we expect the value of grant award will be between £5,000 - £10,000. However the council retains the right to amend the value of the award in the event of over or under subscription.

- Under no circumstances can the grant awarded be used to pay for an employee wages or salaries; this is not a wage substitution scheme.
- For the purposes of this grant scheme, a business is considered to be trading if it is engaged in business activity. This should be interpreted as carrying on a trade or profession, or buying and selling goods or services in order to generate turnover.
- Fully constituted businesses in liquidation, dissolved, struck off or subject to a striking-off notice are not eligible under these conditions.

Exclusions to the Revitalisation Grant funding:

- Businesses located outside of South Somerset
- Businesses with multiple premises where main business is delivered outside of South Somerset
- Businesses who have already claimed a Business Revitalisation Grant or an Innovation Support Fund Grant (1 grant per business)
- Businesses that have already received grant payments that equal the maximum permitted levels of subsidy will not be eligible to receive funding.
- For the avoidance of doubt, businesses that are in administration, insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made, are not eligible for funding under this scheme.
- Businesses who do not meet the eligibility criteria and have no fixed costs

Funding Levels:

- Levels of funding will depend on various business information including (but not limited to); business rates valuation, number of employees, size of business, impact of Covid 19, business sector and grant spend.
- The minimum grant size for this fund is £5,000.
- The maximum grant size for this fund is £10,000.
- Businesses will be assessed against scoring criteria and will determine any size of grant. In all cases, the Council may require evidence from businesses to support any application.
 - Business Rates Valuation
 - Current rate relief being awarded by SSDC
 - Number of employees
 - Directly or indirectly impacted by Covid 19
 - Level of Covid 19 grant funding previously received
 - Funding use
 - Impact on wider Somerset economy

Who can receive the grant:

The person who will receive the grant will be the person who, according to the Council's records, was the ratepayer in respect of the hereditament at the effective date. Where there is no entry in the rating list for the business, the Council will have discretion to determine who should receive the grant.

Where the Council has reason to believe that the information it holds about the ratepayer is inaccurate, it may withhold or recover the grant and take reasonable steps to identify the correct ratepayer. Where, it is subsequently determined that the records held are incorrect, the Council reserves the right to recover any grant incorrectly paid.

Where any business or individual misrepresents information or contrives to take advantage of the scheme, the Council will look to recover any grant paid and take appropriate legal action. Likewise, if any ratepayer is found to have falsified records in order to obtain a grant.

How to apply?

An online application is available on the South Somerset District Council website.

Applications will close on Wednesday 1st December 2021 at 10am.

Should the scheme be over-subscribed the closure date may be brought forward, so businesses are encouraged to apply early on to ensure the Council is able to consider their application.

If you need any assistance in completing the form please contact the revenues team on: restart@southsomerset.gov.uk and title the email South Somerset District Council's Discretionary Restart Scheme application support.

You may be contacted by a member of the Business Grants team who will advise if any further evidence is required after your application has been reviewed.

Eligibility checks will also be carried out including an independent security and fraud check by an external company as required by Government. If an application is received from a business that does not meet all the required criteria, they will be informed as soon as possible of this and the reason(s) they are not eligible.

The Council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Any business caught falsifying their records to gain additional grant money may face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to claw back.

In all cases, businesses will be required to confirm that they are eligible to receive the grants. This includes circumstances where the Council already has bank details for the business and are in a position to send out funding immediately. Businesses are under an obligation to notify the Council should they no longer meet the eligibility criteria for any additional grants.

The Council reserves the right to request any supplementary information from businesses, and they should look to provide this, where requested, as soon as possible.

An application for a South Somerset District Council's Business Revitalisation Scheme is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received via the Council's online procedure.

It is anticipated payments to successful businesses will be made as soon as is reasonably practical after a decision has been made and the grant acceptance form has been returned.

No grants will be awarded without an application being made for the relevant period.

The Council reserves the right to amend this guidance at any given point should it feel appropriate to do so – this could include economic requirements.

Complaints

The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Councils website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal the decision the Council has made about your grant entitlement you should first write to the Grants Team at restart@southsomerset.gov.uk stating your grounds for appeal, your case will be reconsidered by an officer who was not originally involved in your case. Should you remain aggrieved then you can ask for a final appeal which will be considered by either a Revenues or Economic Development Specialist. At this point, the Specialist will make the final decision.