



COVID-19 Business Support Grants

Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) for the period to 31 March 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In response to the rise in infections due to the Omicron variant, the government have announced additional funding to support businesses:
- **Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant** – one-off grants for hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses in rate-paying properties
 - **Additional Restrictions Grant:** a top up to the local authority run scheme to support businesses more broadly that are also severely impacted
- 1.2. This policy focuses on the local authority **Additional Restrictions Grant** scheme only and the one-off grants that are available under this scheme from January 2022. The purpose of this grant scheme is to support businesses that have been severely impacted by restrictions, or by the Omicron variant.
- 1.3. The value of the payment to be made to a business is at the discretion of the local authority.
- 1.4. Businesses must apply for support under this scheme directly to the local council where the business is trading. [Check the postcode of where your business is trading](#) to see which is the local council. Note, if a business applies to the wrong council it will be declined and they will need to apply directly to the correct council.

2. Eligible businesses

- 2.1 A business may be eligible if they are severely impacted by restrictions or the rise of the Omicron variant, AND either:
- They are a business rate payer of the premises they trade from or occupy OR,
 - They are not a business rate payer of the premises they trade from or occupy, and (including those that are self-employed and sole traders) have 49 or fewer employees (a person who receives remuneration via the payroll system)

3. Funding to be provided to businesses

- 3.1. To provide support to as many businesses as possible the discretionary grants, which the council will award, will be capped to a maximum of £2,000.
- 3.2. The council has discretion as to the prioritisation of all applications received; this is likely to be based on local economic need and subject to the availability of funding. The Council reserves the

right to withhold payment where there is evidence that a business has a detrimental impact on the region, residents or our communities.

4. Eligibility Criteria

- 4.1 If the business meets all the following criteria, they could be eligible for a grant:
- based in the Bristol City Council area
 - trading on 4 January 2022 (see indicators below)
 - has ongoing fixed business-related costs e.g. rent, service charges, tool and equipment hire
 - can demonstrate they have suffered a significant fall in income (including online activity) due to the restrictions or the rise in the Omicron variant.
- 4.2. They will be required to self-certify that the business meets all the eligibility criteria
- 4.3. Indicators that a business is trading are where they:
- continue to trade buying and selling goods or services to generate turnover, whether in-person, online, via click and collect services etc. (This excludes activities undertaken for the purposes of acquiring or setting up a proposed new trade)
 - are engaged in business activity, managing accounts, preparing for reopening, planning and implementing COVID-safe measures.
 - are not in liquidation, dissolved, struck off or subject to a striking-off notice or under notice
- This list of indicators is not exhaustive.

Your personal data may be shared with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Their privacy notice can be found here: [BEIS COVID-19 business support grant schemes: privacy notice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

5. Exclusions from the Discretionary Scheme

- 5.1. The business is outside of the Bristol City Council area.
- 5.2. A business premises that is eligible for the Omicron Grant Scheme
- 5.3. Businesses that have reached the subsidy allowance limit.
- 5.4. Businesses that are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made.
- 5.5. Businesses that are part of a national chain.
- 5.6. Private / residential accommodation where rooms / properties are let out, that do not have a food licence.

6. Application process

- 6.1. Applicants must apply using the online application form (which will include, where required, the ability to upload documents at point of application) **within the published dates**. Late applications cannot be accepted.
- 6.2. Previous recipients of an ARG award **will need to re-apply** as the eligibility criteria have changed.
- 6.3. Only one application is required per business and must list each premises they operate (within the Bristol City Council area).
- 6.4. Applicants will need to provide information and evidence, where relevant and/or appropriate including:
 - Business type/sector
 - Company registration number
 - Charity number
 - VAT registration number
 - Business rate/council tax account number
 - Number of employees
 - Evidence of trading
 - Photo ID or alternatively a passport number or driving licence number of the applicant
 - Declaration as to the impact on your business, including the proportion of trade you have lost due to restrictions or the rise in Omicron variant. We may ask for further information or supporting evidence
 - Declaration as to Subsidy allowance
 - Bank details for payment
 - Email or correspondence address
 - Declaration of accuracy and consent to use data for wider verification
- 6.5. Payments will be made by BACS only. Validation checks will be undertaken on the bank account prior to payment, so please ensure you provide accurate bank details on the application form. Providing incorrect bank details may lead to delays in processing the application and could mean the business does not receive a grant.
- 6.6. We may request further information by email; please reply as quickly as possible, and regularly check your spam/junk folders. Failure to reply by any deadline set may mean the business will not receive a grant as we have to assess applications and make all payments by 31 March 2022.

7. Assessment Process

- 7.1. The grant process for all applicants will be open for a defined period.
- 7.2. All business applications received will be assessed against the criteria, scored and prioritised for award. Applicants not successful will receive written notification and successful applications will be accelerated for payment. This will ensure discretionary grants are awarded based on priority need across all business applicants and not on a first-come, first-served basis, which will result in inequitable outcomes.
- 7.3. Proportional top ups to awards will be considered should additional funding be available at the end of this process.
- 7.4. Businesses are encouraged to apply early in order for the assessment and payment deadlines to be achieved and the local authority will aim to process applications promptly, subject to accurate and appropriate evidence being provided at the point of application.

8. Award Process

- 8.1. There is no guarantee that every business that meets the eligibility criteria of this policy will receive a grant.
- 8.2. Eligible applicants may only receive one grant per applicant/business/premises depending on the demand and the funds available (not one per business premises)
- 8.3. We aim to support as many businesses as possible, however there is limited funding available, and prioritisation may be given to businesses or sectors based on local economic need.
- 8.4. We will take account of business size when deciding the grant awards:
 - for business rate properties this will be based on rateable value (£15k or under, over £15k and under £51k and £51k or over), or
 - for other businesses this will be based on the number of employees (sole traders, 1-9, 10-49)
- 8.5. Demand is likely to be high, and the final assessment criteria will be determined once all the applications have been processed.
- 8.6. The council has discretion as to the prioritisation of all applications received and the level of each award.
- 8.7. In the event of complaint or challenge, applicants should follow the council's [complaints procedure](#). No separate dispute mechanism is in place with this fund.
- 8.8. After making an application, the business will need to notify Bristol City Council if they no longer meet the eligibility criteria – for example if they have maximised their subsidy allowance or become insolvent.
- 8.9. In accepting a grant payment, the business is confirming their eligibility for the scheme.

8.10. Any award paid in error must be repaid and will be subject to appropriate recovery action

9. Who will receive this funding?

9.1. The person, business or organisation who according to their application is the eligible beneficiary, certified by the evidence included in their application.

10. Will this grant scheme be subject to tax?

10.1. Grant income received by a business is taxable therefore awards made under this scheme will have to be declared within the relevant annual tax return.

10.2. Only businesses making an overall profit once grant income is included will be subject to tax.

11. Managing the risk of fraud

11.1. Local authorities will not accept deliberate manipulation and will work collaboratively across the region and nationally to share intelligence and resources to detect fraud. Any business found to be giving false eligibility information or seeking to gain additional grant will be investigated. The council will recover money paid in error and fraudulent claims will be prosecuted in the courts.

12. Subsidy Allowances

12.1. Businesses must make a declaration when applying for this scheme in line with the following:

- Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance – businesses are allowed up to £335,000 (subject to exchange rates) over any period of 3 years.
- COVID-19 Business Grant Allowance – businesses are allowed up to £1,900,000.
- COVID-19 Business Grant Special Allowance - if limits under the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance and COVID-19 Business Grant Allowance have been met, businesses may be able to access a further allowance of funding under these scheme rules of up to £10,000,000 provided certain conditions are met.
- Grants under these 3 allowances can be combined for a potential total allowance of up to £12,235,000 (subject to exchange rates).

13. Local Discretion

13.1 Where exceptional circumstances exist, the council reserves the right to vary the criteria of this scheme to respond effectively to local economic need.