

Discretionary funding available to support businesses during lockdown

Plymouth City Council has announced details about new discretionary funding available to support businesses that are severely impacted by the third national lockdown.

The city has been allocated a total of £7.57 million to support local businesses through the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG). More than £1.7 million has already been distributed to help businesses that struggled during the November lockdown

The discretionary funding is intended to support businesses that cannot claim from the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSRG) scheme, which gives grants to rate-paying businesses that have been forced to close due to the national restrictions.

Eligibility

Businesses may be eligible to apply for financial support through the ARG if they:

- Have been legally required to close under current national restrictions but were not eligible for the LRSRG as they do not pay business rates, or pay packaged rent and rates
- Have not been legally required to close but have suffered a significant loss in turnover as a result of the national restrictions.

Due to the limited amount of funding available, the Council will prioritise the following types of businesses when distributing the grants:

- Fishing businesses
- Childcare providers
- Tradespeople and businesses who supply businesses that are required to close (e.g. retail and hospitality)
- Creative and event businesses
- Businesses that pay packaged rent and rates and are required to shut, or supply businesses that have been required to close
- Businesses with high fixed costs that haven't been able to claim from any previous grant schemes.

The Council is prioritising in order to help as many businesses as possible, however it is likely that the Government funding may not meet the demands for help.

Application

Applications for the new ARG will open at **10am on Monday 1 February**. Businesses must complete a new application, even if they have received a discretionary grant during previous lockdowns.

In order to apply for a grant, businesses will need to meet the following criteria:

- Must have been trading on or before 4 January 2021
- Must be a micro or small business with up to 50 employees
- Must have ongoing fixed monthly business costs in Plymouth (for example rents, wages, mooring fees or utilities)
- Can confirm they have been significantly affected by coronavirus (at least a 30 per cent loss in income)
- If a home based business in Plymouth, they must be registered with HMRC and provide their Company Unique Taxpayer Reference as well as a copy of their most recent tax return.

Businesses will not be eligible for funding if they have exceeded state subsidy limits or are in administration, insolvent or where a striking off order has been made. Certain types of businesses will also not be considered eligible, including 'home sharing' businesses, buy to let properties and premises that are used for personal use only (for example, riding stables).

Grant payments

The grants awarded are one-off payments intended to support businesses through the third national lockdown which started on 5 January 2021.

Businesses that do not pay rates will be eligible for a grant of £3,000.

Rate-paying businesses that have not been forced to close but are still significantly affected can claim the following grants:

- For businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or under, grants to be £4,200
- For properties with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000, grants to be £6,300
- For properties with a rateable value of £51,000 or over, grants to be £9,400

Only one discretionary grant will be awarded to any business per lockdown, but if businesses operate from multiple Plymouth premises they may be eligible for additional payments.

The grants are intended to help with fixed business costs rather than to replace lost income, as there are other schemes offering this financial support. More information about these schemes can be found at { HYPERLINK "https://www.visitplymouth.co.uk/invest/business-support/covid-19" } or { HYPERLINK "https://www.heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk/" }

A portion of the overall funding given to the Council will also be allocated to supporting wider economic development activity across the city and key city institutions that provide a significant economic benefit.

For more information about the ARG and LRSG grant schemes, including how to apply, please see: { HYPERLINK "https://www.visitplymouth.co.uk/invest/businesss-grants" }