

RESTART AND RECOVERY SME GRANT - SEPTEMBER 2020

• The main aim of the grant is to help smaller businesses adapt and diversify following the impact of COVID-19.

What is it and who is eligible?

The grant is available to help SMEs access one-to-one specialist advice to address their immediate needs. It must be used to cover 100% of the costs and cannot be used to part-fund expenditure.

To be eligible:

- You must be an SME (including third sector organisations, social enterprises and trading charities) based in Berkshire.
- Your business needs to have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.
- Your business must have the ability to survive following the impact of COVID-19.
- Your business staff headcount must be below 250 FTE. **Businesses with more than 250 employees will not be eligible.**
- Your business **must** have a balance sheet of below €3million.
- Your business **must** have a turnover of below €50million.
- If your business has received state aid in the last 3 years the total should not be in excess of €200,000. **Businesses exceeding this level of state aid funding will not be eligible.**
- Businesses operating in an excluded sector i.e. nuclear, tobacco, airport infrastructure (see ERDF regulation 1301/2013 Art 3(3)), fishery and aquaculture sector, undertakings involved in the primary production of agricultural products, undertakings active in the sector of processing and marketing of agricultural products will not be eligible.

How much money is available?

Eligible SMEs can access grants of between £1,000 - £3,000 (up to £5,000 in exceptional circumstances).

When can you apply?

The grant schemes opens up on **Tuesday 15th September 2020 at midday**. It is expected to sell out very quickly (the last one of this type was sold out within 81 seconds). You should make an Expression on Interest (Eoi) at this stage.

How will you know if you are successful?

The lead partner in this project is Exemplas Ltd. Applicants who pass the gateway diagnostic on the Growth Hub website will be invited to send their details to Exemplas, who will be in contact with a full application form via email and will manage the rest of the application process.

Due to the high volume of Eois expected, it may take up to 10 working days for full application forms to be sent. LEP or Growth Hub staff will not be able to provide an update on the status of your application.

When will you receive your payment?

Grant payments are not made until up to 10 weeks after the purchase of the item or service which your business has paid and claimed for, provided you have a successful formal grant application and an invoice for the service or item.

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What expenditure is eligible?

Examples of eligible expenditure on professional services include:

- Review of the business strategy
- Strategic review of business models
- HR, financial and legal advice
- Coaching and mentoring in leadership and management development / Change management
- Innovation strategy to adapt and diversify products/services
- The introduction of new technology
- Developing or revising marketing/digital strategies to reach new markets
- Mitigating the impact of social distancing measures
- Rebuilding a viable business model
- Developing product offerings
- Legal and environmental health compliance
- Skills analysis and development plans
- Workforce management
- Employee engagement, welfare and wellbeing

Please note these are examples only and not an exhaustive list.

Grants may also be used to purchase minor equipment to adapt or adopt new technology in order to continue to deliver business activity or diversify. For example, a tourism business may need to purchase a second cash register to enable adequate social distancing in its gift shop.

Other examples of potentially eligible expenditure on equipment (where a COVID-19 related impact can be demonstrated) could include:

- IT hardware to support home working
- Software to enable secure remote working
- Online sales/purchasing platforms
- Equipment for remote working including desks, chairs etc.
- Cloud based storage

What will you need for your expression of interest (Eoi)?

You will need to have the following information to hand when completing the eligibility diagnostic:

- Business name
- Contact name
- Email address or contact information
- Trading address (incl. postcode)
- Number of employees based on Full Time Equivalents
- SIC Code/Nature of business – If you don't know your SIC code you can find it here.
- Balance sheet total for last financial year in euros
- Turnover total for last financial year in euros
- Net profit for last financial year in euros
- The value of any state aid funding received within the prev 3 yrs (based on your business' financial year)

NB You need to apply in Euros so you must convert your figures from pounds sterling to euros.

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What else will you need to know?

You will also be asked:

- To provide a brief overview of the activities of the business, your products and services.
- The current issues/challenges that you face and what support you are seeking.
- Does your current business plan adapt and diversify in order to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic?
- If you have reviewed information on other business support provision available and that this is the only provision that meets your business needs?
- Are you currently accessing or in the process of accessing other business or grant support? If yes, which organisation are you working with?

NB it is anticipated that the call for expressions of interest will be open for a very short period before it becomes oversubscribed. Therefore, to ensure you have the best chance of submitting your EoI, please have the above information to hand before you enter the Gateway Diagnostic Tool.

How will you be assessed?

Grants will be awarded on a first come first served basis. All decisions will be final, with no opportunity to appeal. Eligibility checks will also take the following into account:

- Your potential to respond/adapt/strengthen from the impact of COVID-19
- Your ability to identify opportunities to rebuild following the impact of COVID-19
- Your ability to deliver within the timescales available (one month)

How can Blue Peak help?

If you'd like help with preparing the information for your application then please do not hesitate to contact the Blue Peak Team on 0118 321 9151 or via the Contact us form on www.blue-peak.co.uk. We are here to help.

We have a very exciting offering that we are launching to coincide with the Restart and Recovery SME Grant which is targeted at limited companies of all sizes.

It is split into 3 parts and includes a review of your business strategy to ensure it works in the new norm, a deep dive into your numbers so they fit the strategy and finally the support you may need to relaunch it.

The deep dive section, the REFORECASTING of your business, fits within the criteria detailed in the grant and therefore our fees for providing a forecast can in many cases be funded by this grant.

We are happy to help you with any wording you may need within your application to ensure you are fulfilling the necessary criteria to use the grant for the service we are providing.

Call us on 0118 321 9151 and we will be delighted to help you