

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Questions about the Additional Restrictions Grant (Open) and Additional Restrictions Grant (Closed) Schemes**

#### **Where does this funding come from?**

In response to the impact of local and national restrictions on footfall and business demand, the Government has provided a new grant for businesses to complement the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) and (Closed) Addendum schemes – the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG).

Limited funding for the ARG has been provided to Northumberland County Council as a one-off lump sum payment from the Government for the current financial year 2020/21 and for 2021/22.

Although the Council has discretion in the allocation of the ARG, the total funds are limited and so criteria must be set to ensure consistency in the allocation of these finite financial resources provided to the Council by Government.

#### **How has the Council decided who should be supported with this funding?**

To ensure more businesses can be supported from the Local Restriction Support Grant (Open) and the Local Restriction Support Grant (Closed) Addendum, Northumberland County Council has agreed to provide financial support at this critical time to certain business that would not otherwise be eligible for financial support under the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) and Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum.

Unfortunately, the Council will not be able to extend support to all businesses in the County, given the financial constraints, but we are aiming to deliver this scheme as quickly as possible to those businesses within the eligibility criteria set out in the guidance document.

#### **What do you mean by a direct supplier to businesses in the hospitality, accommodation or leisure sectors?**

Directly supplying means providing services or products to a business within the hospitality, accommodation or leisure service for which an invoice would be issued to the business being supplied. This could be evidenced by a recent or current invoice or contract.

#### **Can community halls apply for these Additional Restrictions Grants?**

Community centres and halls were required to close, except for a limited number of exempt activities. Where these organisations meet the eligibility criteria they can apply for an Additional Restrictions Grant.

#### **I am a taxi company, can I apply for this grant?**

If you can demonstrate that you have £200 fixed non-residential property costs each month you can apply for the ARG part of the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open). These must be property costs relating to a building that is not your home however, and not equipment or vehicle running costs.

To help taxi companies the Council is looking at a further support scheme, with the details to be announced soon. Please watch the website for information.

### **I run a self-catering holiday lets or lodges. Can I apply for a grant?**

We are sorry, but the funding we have received from Government does not cover these businesses, and you do not provide the level of 'in-person' service that other accommodation providers do. We know that you provide a very important aspect of the visitor offer in Northumberland and that this will be very disappointing. Please be assured that we are lobbying Government for further support for businesses like yourselves.

### **What if I still have queries about these grants?**

If you still have questions about this grant, you can email [covidgrants@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:covidgrants@northumberland.gov.uk)

## **Questions about all Local Restrictions Support Grants**

### **Do State Aid rules apply?**

Yes, although the UK has left the European Union, State Aid rules still apply during the Transition Period. These grants must comply with the relevant EU law.

Councils are required to make sure that grant payments comply with State Aid rules. We will ask you to confirm that you comply with these rules on your application.

If your business received a Small Business Grant, Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant or Discretionary Grant earlier this year please include the details on your application.

### **Where can I find my business rates account number?**

Your business rates account number is shown in the top left-hand section of your business rates bill. It is a 10-digit number. If you are unable to find your bill, please email [covidgrants@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:covidgrants@northumberland.gov.uk) with the full address of your business. You may be asked for information to confirm your identity before the number is provided to you.

### **Are these grants subject to tax?**

Grant income received by a business is taxable, therefore the Local Restrictions Support Grants will be subject to tax. Only businesses that make an overall profit once grant income is included will be subject to tax.

### **Are there any conditions attached to this grant funding?**

Recipients of grant funding must comply with all the scheme conditions, including State aid requirements and the provision of information to the Council to support monitoring and assurance. By accepting the grant, each recipient confirms that they are eligible for the scheme. If the Council subsequently finds that this self-declaration is incorrect, it will be able to take action and the business would be liable for clawback.

### **When will my grant be paid?**

Our teams have received a high volume of applications and are working through these as quickly as they can. A confirmation email will be sent to you on receipt of your application which will also include a reference number. Once your application is processed a further email will be sent to you advising if your application has been approved or declined. If approved, payment should be with you within 5 to 7 working days.

In the case of the Additional Restrictions Grants we will not be confirming these until after the closing date of 13 December and all applications have been assessed. We will then email you to advise whether your application has been approved.

If you have not received payment within 5 to 7 working days of receiving confirmation that a grant has been approved, you can email [covidgrants@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:covidgrants@northumberland.gov.uk) with your reference number where we may be able to provide you with an update. Thank you for your patience.

### **How will the grant be paid to me?**

Payments are being made by BACS payment. These can take between 3 and 5 days to reach bank accounts from the date of processing.

### **Can I check the progress of my request?**

We ask that you do not contact us to follow up on your request for payment. Doing so requires us to redirect limited resources to answer calls and individual enquiries, slowing our ability to check and process payments to everyone as quickly as possible.

If your grant application is still outstanding, please remain patient. A member of our team will be in contact if further information is needed from you.

We thank you for your patience at this difficult time.

### **Will the money need to be paid back?**

No. This is a grant scheme, so any business eligible for it will not need to repay it.

### **What happens when national restrictions end?**

When national restrictions end the Local Covid Alert Level system will be reintroduced and the schemes that apply will depend on the Tier level in any given area.

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) will continue to provide funding to businesses that are required by law to close and the terms set out in the LRSB (Closed) guidance will apply. The LRSB (Closed) payment thresholds are currently:

- For properties with a rateable value of £15,000 or under, grants to be £1,334 per 28 days;
- For properties with a rateable value of over £15,000 and below £51k, grants to be £2,000 per 28 days;
- For properties with a rateable value of £51,000 or over, grants to be £3,000 per 28 days.

At the end of national restrictions, payment cycles are reset and will correspond to the funding scheme applicable to the Local Covid Alert Level in that area.

### **Is there any other help I can get?**

Please visit the Council's business hub at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/businesshub](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/businesshub) or <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support> for details of all of the support available for businesses.

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