

# **Northumberland County Council**

## **COVID-19 Discretionary Grant Fund Scheme**

### **Scope of this Discretionary Grant Fund**

This phase of the COVID-19 Discretionary Grant Fund is aimed specifically at registered Charities with ongoing fixed property-related costs and which can demonstrate that they have suffered a fall in income due to the COVID-19 crisis and are:

- A registered rate payer.
- Occupy a property in Northumberland and are in receipt of charitable rates relief.
- Have a rateable value under £51k.
- Have not qualified for a grant under the retail, hospitality and leisure grant scheme or the small business grant scheme.
- Have not received any other COVID-19 grant.
- Have not reached State Aid limits.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

- 1 Northumberland County Council can only accept applications from registered charities operating from, and the rate payer for, a property in Northumberland that has a rateable value less than £51k.
2. This grant funding is for organisations that are not eligible for other support schemes. Organisations which are eligible for cash grants from any central government COVID-related scheme (apart from the Self Employed Income Support Scheme and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) are ineligible for funding from the Discretionary Grants Fund. Applications cannot be accepted from organisations which have received funding from (or are eligible to receive funding from) the following funding schemes:
  - Small Organisation Grant Fund.
  - Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant.
  - The Fisheries Response Fund.
  - Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme (DSSS).
  - The Zoos Support Fund.
  - The Dairy Hardship Fund.

Applications cannot also be accepted from organisations that have received any other discretionary COVID-19 grant from Northumberland County Council.

3. Only organisations which were trading (carrying out charitable activities) on 11 March 2020 are eligible for this scheme.
4. Organisations that are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made are not eligible for funding under this scheme.
5. Any payments which would breach State Aid rules cannot be made by the County Council under this scheme. Detailed State Aid requirements are attached as Appendix A to this document. The County Council requires applicants to confirm that by accepting payments under this Scheme, grant recipients are in compliance with State Aid rules.

6. Organisations will need to demonstrate that they have suffered a loss of income as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions and will need to demonstrate significant ongoing fixed premises costs. A de-minimis level will apply to this scheme.

It is envisaged that only one payment will be made per property, in order to maximise the number of organisations in Northumberland which can be supported under this Scheme.

Please note, grant income received by an organisation is taxable therefore funding paid under the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund will be subject to tax.

### **How much grant will be paid?**

The grant allocation will be any value up to £10,000 for smaller charities and a maximum of £25,000 for larger charities and will be determined on a case by case basis based on the evidence provided and rateable value.

However it is envisaged that the majority of grants paid out under this Scheme will be for an amount which is less than £10,000, and scaled to reflect fixed premises costs and the scale of Covid-19 related losses suffered.

### **How to apply for the COVID-19 Discretionary Grant Fund**

This grant funding scheme must be applied for by means of an online application form, available on Northumberland County Council's website, which can be accessed here: [https://form.northumberland.gov.uk/form/auto/covid19\\_disc\\_grant\\_fund](https://form.northumberland.gov.uk/form/auto/covid19_disc_grant_fund)

Queries regarding this scheme can be addressed to the County Council at the following dedicated website address:

[NCCdiscretionarygrant@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:NCCdiscretionarygrant@northumberland.gov.uk)

The online form guides organisations through the application process and prompts applicants for the information required, as well any supporting documents needed (see 'Evidence to support application' below).

All applicants will be required to demonstrate loss of income related to Covid-19 as part of the application process. The applicant must make a declaration regarding this, and provide supporting documents with their application. The Council may write to ask for additional supporting documentation where necessary.

### **Evidence to support applications for a discretionary grant**

Applicants for funding under this Discretionary Scheme will be required to provide proof of their eligibility for funding under this scheme, i.e. their compliance with the eligibility criteria set out above.

Applicants will also be required to provide financial records to demonstrate that they have suffered a drop in income related to the COVID-19 restrictions, along with documentation to demonstrate information such as rateable value of premises, annual value of rent or other fixed property costs, etc.

The information required and examples are included as prompts within the online application form.

### **Timescale for Applications**

Applications will open from 13<sup>th</sup> August to midnight on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020. Applicants should apply as soon as possible as all discretionary schemes will be closed on this date.

### **Variation to the Fund**

The Council reserves the right to vary the terms of the scheme at any time, and without notice, should it be necessary to do so.

If the fund is oversubscribed with the applications received, the Council reserves the right to amend the grant levels to a pro-rata basis, based on the applications received and approved, to be as fair as possible in providing funding to as many eligible organisations as we can.

### **Appeals**

There is no appeal process.

### **Managing the risk of fraud**

Neither the government nor Northumberland County Council will accept deliberate manipulation and fraud - and any organisation caught falsifying their records to gain grant money will face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to claw back, as may any grants paid in error.

It is important that applicants ensure that they provide accurate bank details for grant payments and that these relate to the organisation concerned.

### **More information on Organisation Grants**

The full Department of Organisation, Energy and Industrial Strategy guidance on the Discretionary Grant Scheme can be found at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/887310/local-authority-discretionary-fund-la-guidance-v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887310/local-authority-discretionary-fund-la-guidance-v2.pdf)

For more information on the earlier organisation grants – the Small Organisation Grant Fund and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant Fund, please visit:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/881040/organisation\\_support\\_grants-local\\_authorities\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881040/organisation_support_grants-local_authorities_guidance.pdf)

To apply for the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant Fund, please visit:

[https://form.northumberland.gov.uk/form/auto/covid19\\_emergency\\_grant](https://form.northumberland.gov.uk/form/auto/covid19_emergency_grant)

## Appendix A:

### State Aid Requirements – Northumberland County Council Discretionary Grant Scheme

Any organisation seeking to receive a grant under this Scheme will, by submitting their application by way of the online form available on Northumberland County Council's website, be required to confirm that they have read and understood the following paragraphs relating to State Aid.

Organisations are also required to make a statement that acceptance of any grant funding by them conforms with State Aid requirements.

#### Confirmation of State Aid received under the COVID-19 Temporary Framework for UK Authorities scheme

Following the outbreak of the Coronavirus, the European Commission has approved schemes to aid organisations affected by the Coronavirus outbreak on the basis of their Temporary Framework, including the COVID-19 Temporary Framework scheme for the UK.

The maximum level of aid that a company may receive is €800 000 (€120 000 per undertaking active in the fishery and aquaculture sector or €100 000 per undertaking active in the primary production of agricultural products). This is across all UK schemes under the terms of the European Commission's Temporary Framework. The Euro equivalent of the Sterling aid amount is calculated using the Commission exchange rate applicable on the date the aid is offered, and may be accessed here: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/how-eu-funding-works/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro_en)

Any aid provided under this scheme will be relevant if you wish to apply, or have applied, for any other aid granted on the basis of the European Commission's Temporary Framework. You will need to declare this amount to any other aid awarding body who requests information from you on how much aid you have received. You must retain this letter for four years after the conclusion of the UK's transition from the EU and produce it on any request from the UK public authorities or the European Commission.

Aid may be granted to undertakings that were not in difficulty (within the meaning of Article 2(18) of the General Block Exemption Regulation) on 31 December 2019, but that faced difficulties or entered in difficulty thereafter as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The General Block Exemption Regulation can be accessed here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02014R0651-20170710>

If you are an undertaking in difficulty within the meaning of Article 2(18) of the General Block Exemption Regulation you may still be entitled to de minimis aid if you have received less than €200,000 in de minimis aid in the last three years. You should contact us if you consider that you may qualify for de minimis aid on this basis.

This aid is in addition any aid that you may have received under the De Minimis regulation allowing aid of up to €200,000 to any one organisation over a three fiscal year period (i.e. your current fiscal year and previous two fiscal years), and any other approved aid you have received under other State aid rules, such as aid granted under the General Block Exemption Regulation.