



GUIDANCE

About the Dorset SME Recovery Grant

- As part of a Grant Scheme (**Dorset SME Recovery Grant**) funded by The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and run by Dorset Growth Hub, funding may be available to assist your business. You will need to demonstrate how the COVID-19 situation has impacted the business and how this grant will help to make positive change in order to help business survival and job safeguarding.
- These grants are 100% funded by ERDF and no match or repayment is required.
- The grants are available for the amount of **£1,000 to £3,000** or £5,000 for exceptional circumstances.
- You will need to **demonstrate how the COVID-19 situation has impacted the business** and how this grant will help to make positive change in order to help business survival and job safeguarding.
- Clear articulation of what the business plans to do (the project) and how the project is a step change from existing operations (a point of difference or additionality) are the key to a successful grant application.
- The grant application process is competitive and funds are limited. The onus is on the applicant to present as strong a case as possible as with any other application for external finance.
- **Grant application close date is 31st January 2021, or once the total budget is allocated, whichever is first.** We expect there to be a high demand so apply as soon as possible. Any applications submitted after this date will not be considered.

Business Eligibility

- The business must be **registered and trading as of 1st February 2020.**
- The business **must be based in Dorset** and have a registered or trading address in Dorset LEP area.
- Only one grant can be applied for and issued per business as part of the Dorset SME Recovery Grant Scheme.
- Recipients of our former grant schemes since January 2017 (DBGP grant schemes, e.g. Start-up Grant, Digital Grant, Growth Grant) can apply for this grant.
- If trading as a Sole Trader or Unincorporated Partnership, proof of trading with UTR (Unique Tax Reference) number and start date will be required.
- If your business operates in one of the sectors below, you will **not be eligible** to apply for the Dorset SME Recovery Grant due to Central Government Legislation. The sectors that are ineligible for this grant and support include: *Fishery & Aquaculture, *Primary production, processing and marketing of agricultural products, *Coal, Steel and shipbuilding sectors, *Synthetic Fibres, *Generalised School Age Education, *Banking and Insurance Companies, * Nuclear related activity (*please follow the link for full eligibility guidelines or e-mail enquiries@dorsetgrowthhub.co.uk if you are unsure)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/902105/ESIF-GN-1-003_ERDF_Eligibility_Guidance_v10_.pdf
- By applying for this grant, you are formally engaging with the Dorset Business Growth Programme and you may be contacted to receive some support or guidance. This could be a meeting to assess the business need for support or as per a referral from the Dorset Growth Hub or Dorset Gateway.



If you require additional support from our team for your application, please contact e-mail enquiries@dorsetgrowthhub.co.uk with your query.

Project Costs

Dorset SME recovery grant can be used for eligible project costs, which may typically be:

- 1-2-1 specialist advice which SMEs could call on to address their immediate needs in response to the impact of COVID-19 e.g. HR, accountants, legal, financial, H&S, IT / digital or sector specialists etc.
- For the visitor economy, this could also include productivity improvements such as enhanced use of digital tools such as yield management software, mentoring, networking or other measures.
- It could also support to develop innovative delivery in a socially distanced economy – for example, new ways of delivering cultural events and festivals that are so critical to the visitor experience; and / or
- Purchase of minor equipment to adapt or adopt new technology in order to continue to deliver business activity or diversify in response to COVID-19.

Dorset SME recovery grant cannot be used for:

- Repayment of debts
- Land/property purchases, and rental payments/deposits
- Direct Labour- Salaries/wages
- Stock and consumables
- General running costs of the business or working capital
- Repairs & Renewals **including replacement of plant & equipment**
- Vehicles and highly portable equipment
- Training
- Research & Development
- Previously incurred expenses
- Projects that have already commenced
- Any equipment and consumables associated with PPE and social distancing measures

NOTE- Grants are not suitable for replacement expenditure or what are considered “business as usual” business costs. Equipment can be new or used.

Application Process

- **Application is by Expression of Interest (EOI) and supported by management information.** Management information provision is not essential but will strengthen the application. This could include the provision of historic/forecast financial reporting, a business/marketing plan, and supplier quotes for the planned project.
- **Completed EOI with supporting information should be submitted via the online form or e-mailed to applications@dorsetgrowthhub.co.uk** and as part of this process you are signing up as a participant of the Dorset Business Growth Programme.
- Upon receipt, applications will be forwarded to the Business Consultant for assessment and then reviewed by a panel (usually held fortnightly). Applicants will be notified within 4 weeks as to whether or not the application has been successful, and at that point a grant offer letter is issued with a signed agreement date.



- Please note that there are specific procurement policies that must be complied with for grant claiming, full guidance is provided with grant offer documentation.

Grant Claim and payments

- There are two ways the grant can be paid, **either to you, as 'cash back' once you have paid for and completed the project, or directly to the supplier** once an agreement between you and the supplier is signed.
 1. **If the grant is paid to you** - we will require evidence that invoices relating to the project have been settled from a bank account (no cash or credit card payments accepted) and evidence that procurement policies have been adhered to. Full claim procedures will be provided with the grant offer letter.

OR

 2. **If the grant is paid to the supplier** – we will require evidence of the agreement/contract between you and the supplier for the services/goods provided. We will also need an invoice from the supplier to be settled by WSX Enterprise Ltd (Dorset Growth Hub).
- If you are not VAT registered the grant is inclusive of VAT; make sure to confirm this on the application form.
- If you are VAT registered, and you pay the supplier, the grant is exclusive of VAT as you are able to reclaim the VAT as normal. However, if you request us to pay the supplier directly, the grant has to include VAT thus reducing the value of the grant to you the customer.
 - It is best to check with the supplier first on whether their costs include VAT and if you could pay this separately.
- Any claims for **project costs must be in the future** following the contractual signed agreement date. No retrospective claiming will be eligible. **Hence, your grant must be agreed before your project costs are incurred.**
- **Grants must be claimed in full within a 2 month agreement period.** This starts from the date the grant offer is made. Please note that this time limit is subject to variation and the definitive deadline will be in the offer letter.
- **All invoices must be submitted to us by 28th February at the latest.** Any invoices submitted after this date will not be eligible.
- **All invoices to be settled by WSX Enterprise by 31st March 2021.**

We have kept this guidance and the application process as simple as possible and have not attempted to answer every question which might arise. If you require more information, are unsure if you are eligible for the support we offer or have specific questions on what can be funded, the application process or anything else, can be addressed to enquiries@dorsetgrowthhub.co.uk and we will get back to you as soon as we can. Please bear with us as we expect there to be a large number of applications.